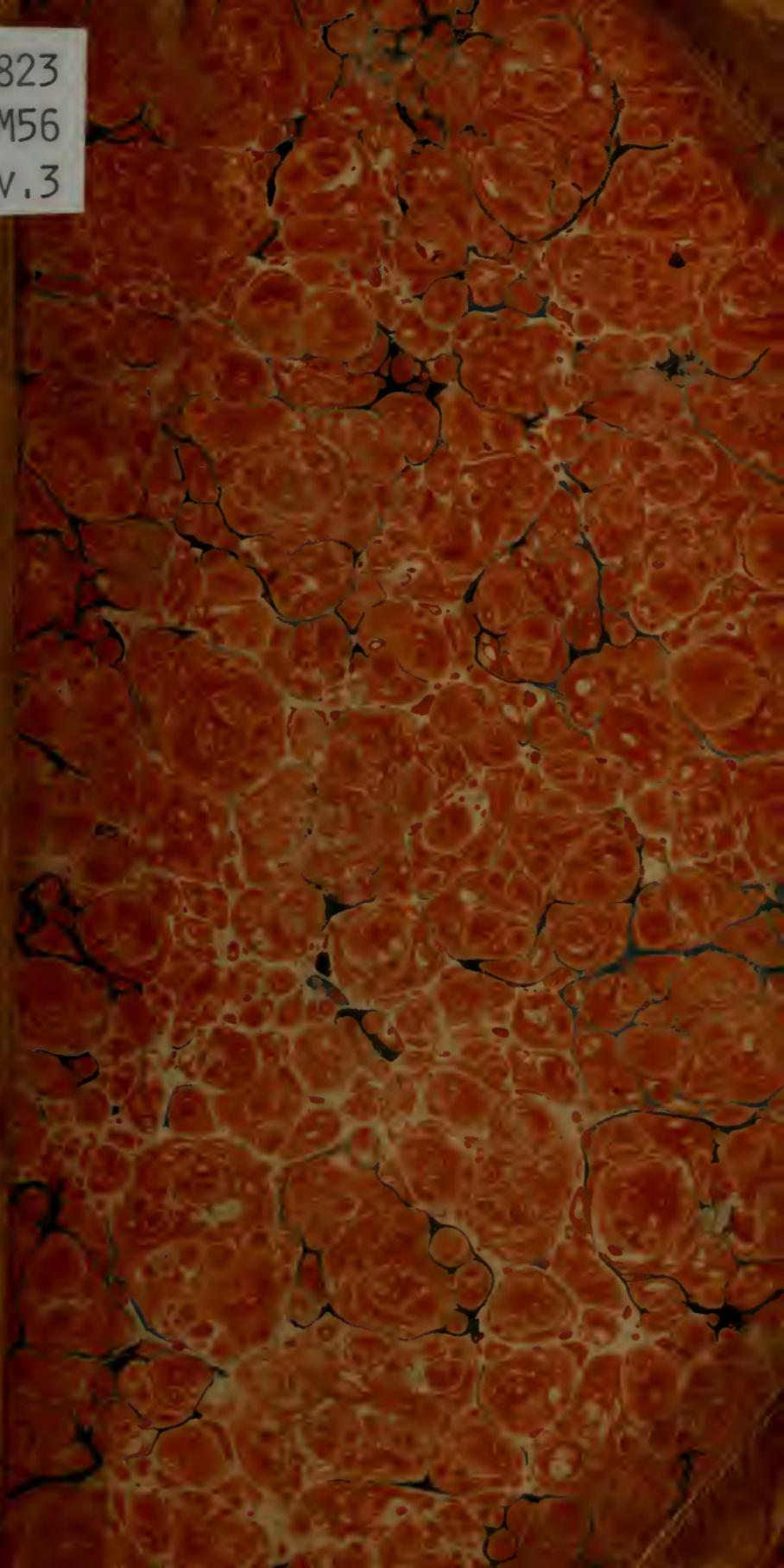


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THE
METROPOLIS.

A Novel,

BY THE AUTHOR OF LITTLE HYDROGEN, OR
THE DEVIL ON TWO STICKS IN LONDON.

— to shew
The very age and body of the time.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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THE
METROPOLIS.

CHAPTER I.

WE had, for a long time, lost sight of our rattle-brained Etonian. He had, in spite of Fidelio's saving him once, gone back to his old extravagant tricks. He had lost money on the turf, at the clubs, by assisting friends, and by expensive females ; and had, in a few months, travelled from London to Brighton, from Brighton to Bath, from Bath to the Isle of Man, thence to Scotland, whence he took shelter in the sanctuary of Holy-Rood House ; and his next journey would inevitably have been to the King's Bench, or the

Fleet, but that an uncle died just in time to put him into a second fortune. We gave him a deal of advice, and he gave us a deal of stories of his adventures. He promised to take better care of a second fortune, than he did of his first; but I do not believe him. Fidelio preached to him a little. Indeed this is my only fault with Fidelio: he does preach a little too much.

It is astonishing how many vicissitudes, and how much of life our young blade had seen in a short time. Extravagance leads men to a thousand shifts and to a thousand scenes in life, which, in their prosperity and inexperience, they would have trembled to have met. I am not equal to giving the detail of his adventures in his own humorous way; neither do histories of plundering attorneys and money-lenders, ruinous and dissipated male and female companions, Greeking, in all its branches, and the artifices of bad company, suit a female pen; (this has been sufficiently

ciently developed in the Greeks, Pigeons, Fashion, and other works of the same author,) but I cannot omit his story of Dame Mc Grongar, with whom he lodged, whilst sheltering himself from arrest under the Scottish laws, and from whom this youth expected to receive pecuniary assistance; not calculating that she came too far north for him.

His landlady was a compound of religion and of liquor, of economy, and of the love of good living. She had hoarded up a little ready money, which she held next in value to a huge family Bible; and, although she had great confidence in methodism, which was her creed, she had very little in her fellow-creature, and she accordingly locked up her gold and her bottle, which were her chiefest enjoyments; but she reversed the practice of economists in pleasure, for she drew upon her bottle, whilst she gave age to her gold, old money and new liquor being the objects of her enjoy-

ment. The Bible was her *spiritual* comfort ; the bottle her *spirituous* delight ; the former enlightened her, the latter drowned the blaze of her evangelical lights. Without moisture, what is illumination ? Therefore she kept her lamp burning with spirits of wine, and with alcohol.

She used to assert that she dipped deep into the Bible, and drew out great sources of wisdom therefrom ; but her views were sometimes erroneous, in as much as she sometimes saw double. Thus she thought to double her lights ; but whilst her magnifying powers increased, her farthing rushlight of faith burned low in the socket ; the *spirit*, with her, was strong, but the *light* was weak : and both went out daily in smoke and unsavoury vapour.

Our young extravagant had already, though young, seen a good deal of life, and he considered

Dame

Dame M^c Grongar as no bad subject to play upon, and to procure a loan from. He showed her courtliness and affability, attention and respect. He, for a few days, kept good hours; she complained of indigestion; and he gave her a little brandy and water, with some chalk, which had a *vera happy effec.* He called next day to enquire the effect of the medicine. As he put his hand on the lock of the door, the old woman started up; and, as he opened it gently, he perceived her through the aperture, hiding the whiskey bottle under the table, and opening a huge Bible. "So," said he, "you are dipping (she looked confused) into the Scriptures." "Yes," replied she, laying her hand upon the book, "this is my staff; (a lame account,) I am just *seeking aid.*" "And so am I," cried he, "but is the Bible your meat and your drink? if so, no wonder you should be troubled with a stomach complaint; for I am convinced that you cannot digest what is now before you." "Ogh, heigh!" cried the

old hypocrite. He now now made his request for a trifling loan, to which the old lady answered, " that she would *tak a thought.*" She sent for her minister to consult him on the matter. They finished a bottle of whiskey together ; but the *spirit* did not move them to lend, and a refusal followed.

The Duke was now returned from his northern tour. I saw Colonel ——, who met him at a party. His absence had been very beneficial to his estates ; but it had in no wise changed him. He was still that artless, unsuspecting character which I first knew him, the same open, generous, good-hearted creature ; shy, from diffidence, but full of nobility of sentiment, and of delicacy of feeling. The Colonel, however, told me that he was rather less grave, and more communicative ; he had travelled to some purpose, and brought with him much information. Amongst other very extraordinary events, in a certain Court, he detailed the

fol-

following surprising particulars, respecting a crowned head. It throws a light upon a very black transaction, and is little known; I therefore submit it to the reader, without further preface or comment, as I had it myself.

The Story of an illustrious Prince in the North, who fell a victim to a trio of favorites:—

Respecting this Potentate, I cannot avoid a slight digression to lament the opinion which has generally prevailed of him, and which appears in some degree well founded, by the many acts of severity and violence which occurred during his short reign. But this opinion is far from being correct; and all those acts of delirium were diametrically the reverse of his natural disposition, which was mild, affable and gentle, manly, with good intellect, and a tolerable share of such education as the jealousy of the preceding reign

had permitted. It was only when urged by a noble, but designing and wily trio to a state of intoxication, which undoubtedly brought on paroxysms of insanity, that he outstepped the bounds of moderation. This disposition was clearly evinced in the moments of sobriety, and was ultimately the cause of his horrid and barbarous assassination, by a certain trio. The manner of this murder has been stated in various ways, as suited the purpose of writers. I shall give it here on the very best authority.

The Prince had, for some time, separated himself from the bed of his consort; not from any cause for such defection on the part of his wife, whose amiable character and transcendent virtues no one held in higher estimation than this misguided sovereign; and, indeed, this caused him not only to treat this illustrious lady with every mark of respect and honour, but to resent, in the most serious manner, any want of either,

ther, in his own, or her Court. For his private residence he had built a retiring palace, not very far from the metropolis. This had been erected in a very short space of time; had something the appearance of a fortress, or place of security; and had been executed on a plan of his Majesty's own. His own immediate suite of apartments was on the second floor. These were handsome, but plain. From the sleeping room there was an antichamber, in which, besides the door of entry, were three others, opening to three staircases, descending, in different directions, to as many suites of apartments, occupied by some favorites under the protection of this exalted personage; and it was his general custom, if not publicly engaged, after dining, to withdraw to one or other of these for the evening, and retire about midnight to repose in his own chamber.

When it was not this Sovereign's intentions to

visit the lower apartments, the trio generally had the honor of being admitted; and, as this misguided Prince had the most unbounded confidence in them, and conceived that their fidelity kept pace with his munificence and bounties, they held the three most considerable places, for power and emolument, in his gift. On such occasions, they usually were retained to sup with their master; and they then took especial care, that he should indulge most freely with the bottle. When he had done so to excess, his natural disposition was lost, and was succeeded by the most furious and violent one imaginable. Then arrived the period of gaining whatever had been settled prior to the meeting, and of punishing all such as had the misfortune of falling under their displeasure in any shape. This Prince was, at all times, jealous of his prerogatives, and unbounded in his ideas of power. These therefore were the moments, to point out to him such as were intended as victims

tim*s*

tims to their machinations, and, by noticing any failure in conduct, or neglect of any of the royal ordinances, to throw the sovereign into the most terrible rage and fury, during which an order was given for the most vigorous punishment, which was almost instantly inflicted on the unhappy, and frequently guiltless offender.

These acts of barbarity had been so frequently repeated, as to terrify the whole country; and they began to wean the hearts of his subjects from their love and allegiance, as well as to cause a belief of the sanguinary disposition of their sovereign. But as these horrid acts emanated from scenes of excess, entered into when his friends were of the party, when its fumes had evaporated by repose, recollection would return and awaken his natural feelings of humanity. Then some faint remembrance of what had passed would occur, and give him infinite pain for

for the extravagance of the moment; and to atone for it as much as lay in his power, he would immediately dispatch orders, to stay the intemperate command of intoxication;—alas! generally too late; for the mutilated victim was already gone on his miserable journey to his place of exile. However, what could be effected, usually was; and a courier was dispatched to bring back the unhappy subject of complicated vengeance. This actually happened in many instances, and even pecuniary benefits were bestowed. But could this reconcile the poor sufferer to his dreadfully mutilated appearance? The wretched being still retained those outward marks caused by intemperate rashness; and his heart rancled hatred in the extreme for the cruel act.

The frequent repetitions of these horrors, caused his Majesty, in his cool and temperate moments, to reflect; and finding that he never committed

mitted these barbarities but during the excesses he gave into with his convivial friends, and that, by these generally faulty violences, he should eventually alienate the affections of his subjects, he very judiciously determined to avoid this in future, and, in order to prevent acting contrary to the natural dictates of his better understanding, to dismiss from his council and intimacy, the persons he wisely considered the cause of this unnatural conduct, and appoint them to some honorable exile, giving them distant lucrative governments, wide from each other, and also from the seat of power at home.

No sooner was this hinted to them, than a meeting took place, at which, to prevent this arrangement taking effect, the death of their too liberal sovereign was determined on, and the manner settled between these ungrateful conspirators. An opportunity

nity of executing this regicide plan soon offered, and was taken advantage of in the following manner.

The morning after this diabolical assassination was determined on, the unsuspecting Prince ordered the triumvirate to repair to his chateau, as he usually called the retiring palace, at the hour they generally did, when he intended them the honor of supping with him. Accordingly they met; and, during this repast, they were particularly cautious that their victim should have no suspicion. By every art they urged him to excess, and inflamed his passions to pleasure. They laughed, drank, sung, and repeated many provocative stories; all which the unsuspecting Prince heartily enjoyed and bore a part in. From a fatality not uncommon in human affairs, he hastened his destruction, by telling them the governments to which he had that very day nominated them. This determined them to

seize

seize the present moment; but as many attendants were in an adjoining room, they deferred the act yet a little while. At last, having excited their master's passions to the utmost, he arose and said, he should retire for the night, but desired them to stay and finish their bottles. This was precisely what they wished; and, as soon as their master quitted them, they sat down again, but avoided any more wine.—

The Prince, on entering his bed-chamber, which was near the apartment he had quitted, having only one closet between, put on a night-gown and slippers, and then descended one of the private staircases. This might be about half past ten o'clock; and it was his intention to pass away the time, until the hour he was accustomed to retire to rest; which was usually half past twelve.

As soon as he had quitted them, the principal
of

of the trio, as agreed amongst them, directly repaired to the palace where the heir apparent resided, and went to that prince's apartments. He found the prince in the act of undressing, as he usually went to bed at that early hour. Surprised at so late a visit, he naturally enquired the cause of it. The reply to this was, a request that his highness, instead of going to rest, would please to put on full dress regiments, and in them wait his return, which would be about one o'clock or a little later. "For what purpose this extraordinary request?" "Ask no questions; but at my return I will explain all." "Is there a revolution?" "There will be." "And my father?" "Ask me no more; but expect me at the time I have mentioned." Then making his obeissance, the conspirator retired, and rejoined the monsters he had left:

We will now return to the trio we left at table. They had settled their plan in the following manner.

As,

As, from the power and the situation possessed by these men, the executive government was entirely in their hands, it was no difficult matter for them to arrange every thing to their will and satisfaction without the palace. In consequence, there were placed at the barriers of the city such chosen troops and officers as were sure and devoted to their interest. Orders had also been issued, prior to assembling at the little palace, that all the soldiers within the city, except those on duty, should be on the parade, before the palace, which was the usual place, at half past eleven o'clock of that night, with their arms complete and a certain number of ball cartridges in their cartouche-boxes, their officers also attending in their places, and there await the coming of the commander in chief. All this was most punctually obeyed. We now return to the conspirators, and follow them through their diabolical and ungrateful transaction.

As the regularity of the Prince's time of going to rest was well known to the murderous party, a little before twelve o'clock they arose from their table and proceeded to his bed-chamber. Here they found the first valet de chambre in waiting for his master's return to perform the usual offices of his station. This man was ordered to withdraw. They observed, that matters of state, which they must communicate to his master that night, obliged them to see him, and that they should wait his coming, and should afterwards, on retiring, send for him, that he might attend to his duty. The poor man, knowing the power and authority of these persons, quitted the chamber instantly, and retired to his own, patiently awaiting to be summoned. As soon as he had left them, they drew forth their daggers, and one of them taking up a poker, they placed themselves at each of the private doors, and listened attentively to hear ascending footsteps on the different stairs.

About one o'clock they heard their victim approaching. They all surrounded that door; the one with the poker placing himself at the side the door opened from. The Prince now doing this, and whilst still holding the knob handle, received a blow on the wrist from this poker, of such violence as nearly to sever the hand from the arm. In the other hand, he had a large silver candlestick and light, and with it this unfortunate sovereign must have defended himself well, for it was beaten almost flat at the base. The daggers of the assassins, however, soon completed the murder; and he was laid lifeless at the feet of the merciless wretches. They then stripped the body, laid it on the bed, and quitted the chamber, telling those in waiting in the outer apartments, that their master had suddenly expired in an apoplectic fit; and leaving the palace they repaired to the parade.

One of these men, the first in office, now entering the palace where the heir resided, on seeing this prince, fell on his knees, and said, "Sire, your guards attend, and wait to see their sovereign on the parade." With much agitation this amiable prince followed this monster, and, on reaching the parade, he was received by all there assembled, with shouts and hourrahs, and hailed as successor to the prince. He then, accompanied by the commander in chief and the other conspirators, passed through the ranks of the soldiery. The parade was dismissed, and the new prince retired into the palace. At eight o'clock the following morning all was as quiet as if nothing of moment had occurred,—so careful were the precautions which had been taken. The death of one prince and the accession of the other was proclaimed through the city; and as no one dared give his opinion, all held their tongue respecting this melancholy and dreadful event.

I was

I was just preparing for a *dejeuné à la fourchette*, given by Count ——, when Fidelio entered. He seemed more than usually agitated. “Are you to be one of the party?” said I. “No, replied he; I have not that honor,” with a formality which he had gained abroad; “but I have received a letter from a friend of ours which requires your perusal, and most strict consideration.” Here he looked particularly stern; and, after playing with the letter, in a distracted manner for a few seconds, he withdrew. All this seemed very mysterious to me. I felt somehow ill at ease. At length, I observed the superscription; and found that it was from Harry Wildish. The post-mark was Geneva; and its contents were nearly as follows:—

“ My dear Friend,

“ My misfortune in offending Lady —— ——,

and

and afterwards in wounding you, has never been absent from my remembrance. Had you fallen in that contest, what a wretch I should have thought myself; but you recovered, and I gained, by my misconduct, the most valuable of friends, one whose advice, whose kindness, whose example has been invaluable to me. From such a friend can I conceal any thing? Certainly not. I am not at ease here; my heart is in London. I carried a shaft away in my bosom, from the banks of the Thames. I never can be truly happy without her, who I, unwittingly offended, in a moment of inebriety, and who seems to love you, like a brother. But, most valued friend, if you have any pretensions to her heart, use no dissimulation; inform me thereof by return of post; you shall never hear me murmur. Your felicity is dearer to me than my own. Preserve my secret, and I shall submit to my fate. Your answer will determine me in continuing or in

abridging

abridging my travels. I hope that I am not indiscreet in this application to you. If so, pardon the head ; the heart is not in error.

Yours, with affectionate regard,

HARRY WILDISH."

Why should he give me this letter ? said I to myself. It was a confidential communication to him, and should have been kept secret. It was out of place ; it was scarcely friendly to make me a party concerned ; yet has he never proposed for my hand himself, and this submitting the sentiments of another to my consideration, is a proof that friendship is the only tie which can ever exist between us. I confess that I *almost* felt mortified at this thought ; and I resolved to try him by affecting to listen to Harry Wildish's proposals, when a letter from Fidelio arrived. It was couched in the following grave and respectful terms :—

" Dear

“ Dear Lady,

“ It required all my moderation and philosophy to guide me in what line of conduct I was to adopt, when Mr. Wildish’s letter reached me. After some hesitation and painful doubt, I resolved upon that mode which would most prove my disinterestedness, my attachment, and respect for you. M. Wildish is the son of a rich and of a very old baronet. He is moreover a young man of good heart, and appears to be tenderly attached to you. Such an offer cannot be any thing but flattering to almost any lady, as he is, in person and in connections, every way respectable. I cannot help saying that it would have been more satisfactory to me, had Mr. Wildish not imposed this task upon me; but I have ever made it a rule through life, to make every other feeling subservient and secondary to a sense of duty. This duty, my dear madam, I have rigidly (*rigid* enough thought I,) performed towards you, towards friendship, and towards

towards myself. To comment on this subject is impossible ; it must rest upon its own bearings ; it must be acted upon by your will only.

I have the honour to be,

Dear Lady,

With the most anxious solicitude for your happiness,

Your most devoted friend and affectionate servant,

FIDELIO."

P. S. I shall leave town for three days, and shall be happy, in the interim, to be honored with your commands."

To be honoured with my commands ! What can he mean ? cried I, somewhat indignant. He wishes to give me to another ; he praises, he extols that person ; and yet he wishes me, forsooth, to let him know, I presume, how my heart stands in relation to him. What wretches men are ! Why if I loved Harry Wildish, I should certainly not *formally inform Fidelio* ;

and, if I rejected him, I can see nothing but indelicacy in doing it through a third person. Perhaps, thought I again, Fidelio has the vanity to think that I am attached to himself, and expects that I will flatter his self-love by making a written avowal of my sentiments. Why, I might just as well court the man, or pop the question to him at once. I am determined, at length, resolved I, to lead him a dance ; and, although I do not mean to accept the youth in question, to make him believe that I will. But then how to refuse him delicately ? This must be done by proxy ; and I must, *bon gré mal gré*, consult my mother ; not a very pleasant thing, but absolutely necessary.

I accordingly found her in her dressing-room, and I opened my budget to her, not failing to call Fidelio stupid, conceited, vain, prosing and troublesome. Touching the propriety of accepting young Wildish's hand, I was surprised to find my mother very favourable

able to the match; nay, more to hear her earnest recommendation of it, accompanied by such a string of praises and detailed good qualities as quite put me out of patience; although I really once thought that I felt a slight kindness for him.

As to Fidelio's conduct, she equally annoyed me by calling it the most noble, the most honorable, the most manly, and heroic in the world! and why? because, forsooth, she assured me that he was deeply in love with me. "Stuff!" cried I, "I won't believe a word of it. A man who is deeply in love with a woman, does not try to give her away to another." "So much the better," replied she, "because in that case, you can accept of Harry Wildish's hand, without the fear of rendering Fidelio unhappy." This was a most cruel hit. I got quite in a passion; wept, as my sex often does, for pure spite, and flew away

to my dressing-room, to brood upon my perplexities.

On shutting the door I perceived my mother smile, which I thought most cruel of all ; but which immediately undeceived me as to her sentiments. She was merely trying to sound me as to my regard for Fidelio ; and, whilst she was pretending to be Harry Wildish's advocate, she was pleading Fidelio's cause. Very artful ! very woman like indeed ! I therefore shut myself up.

What a relief had a letter come, at this juncture, from the Duke ; but times were changed. He had now been in England for some time ; but was evidently disentangling. How ungenerous ! as I had wholly unloosened his hands before ; but love is like a tender flower, if it pass from one hand to another,

or

or from one climate to another, it runs great risk of perishing ; at all events it loses its bloom and fragrance, and never can return to its first soil. If transplanted, its worth is alienated ; if torn from its first attractions and habits, it expires suddenly. Love is the offspring of a day ; but, unlike the vegetable world, it has no returning spring.

My mother now sent for me to her room ; but I absolutely refused to obey her summons. She next opened a correspondence, although on the same floor, and asked me what I wished her to do, respecting an answer to Fidelio's letter, or whether I meant to answer it myself? To this I sent the following laconic billet :—

“ My dear Mother,

“ Answer just as you please, write exactly what you please.

Your affectionate Daughter.”

My mother's next official note :—

“ Shall I also write to Harry Wildish ?”—

Answer :—“ Just as you think fit.”

Note No. 3.

“ What shall I say ?”

Answer :—“ Any thing which you think proper, my dearest mother ; but in the handsomest terms.”

Reply :—

Reply:—

“ My dear Child,

“ Shall I refuse him ?”

Answer:—“ Certainly, yes.”

Note No. 5.

“ And tell Fidelio so ?”

Reply:—

“ Just as you like ; 'tis all one to me.”

We kept up this paper attack and defence work until dinner time ; when I shammed ill, laid down on the bed, and humbly intreated not to be disturbed till the next day, when I would make up my mind to hear her report progress as to her negotiations. My mother, who has certainly spoiled me, kindly indulged me in this, and left me to myself until

breakfast time the ensuing morn, when we entered more coolly and dispassionately on the subject. My night was not the quietest in the world ; all my disappointments rushed upon my imagination at once, and banished sleep from my eyelids. No one has found Morpheus a greater flirt than I have. Excess of pleasure or of pain, too late hours, or too early ones, a fault of which I seldom have been guilty, tended equally to divorce him from my pillow. Well may the poet say of him—

* * * * *

“ Soft on his downy pinions flies from woe,
“ To light on lids, unsullied by a tear.”

Yet, on recollection, I could not help observing, that when sleep flies us *in health*, the fault is ours : we banish him, like jilts, at the hour when, according to the laws of nature, he should come ; and then, like affected coquettes, we expect him to wait

our

our time, and to come, at our beck or wink, whenever we please. But the laws of reason and of fashion do not blind so easily. Here I fell asleep: moralizing always has that effect on me.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT a fool I have made of myself! were my first words at rising. I resolved, next, to compose myself, to hear whatever my mother had to say to me at breakfast, and to abide by whatever her maternal affection and good sense might suggest. We embraced most tenderly at meeting, and I begged her pardon for the symptoms of stubbornness which I had shown the preceding day, and for all the childish and unnecessary trouble which I had given her. "That," said my mother, most good-humoredly and with a smile, "is more my fault than your's. I have spoiled, you and never resisted that strong head of thine." Here she affectionately tapped me on the cheek, and proceeded to read me a gentle lecture; at the same time informing

ing me of all the particulars of what she had done ; the substance of which was—

That she wrote, in the handsomest manner to both these swains, gratefully acknowledging the mark of favor and preference of the former, and eulogizing the latter, for a conduct so uncommon, and so handsome, in declining the offered hand. She assured the youth that the sincerest friendship and every sentiment, short of love, was his from both her and myself ; and to Fidelio, she proposed, to return to our society, with additional claims on our regard, and begged him just to act as if the correspondence had never taken place. This piece of delicacy and generalship, set us all at ease together : and, in two days more, the family was *in statu quo*, ante all these perplexities. I felt glad that I had not played the jilt or the flirt with Fidelio ; and we all resumed our calm.

A calm

A calm however was a state in which I seemed destined never to remain long; for an unforeseen and an unhappy event now threw us all into confusion. My brother again returned suddenly from his regiment; but, instead of coming to cheer every heart, his arrival cast a general gloom over us all. His health appeared entirely ruined; he had had a brain-fever; and he had been delirious for some time. Fortunately this was unknown to us until his arrival. When the violence of the malady subsided, he fell into a general decay, and he came amongst us like the ghost of what he was. He wished to sell out of the army; but we prevailed upon him to delay the step until he should give his native air a fair trial. The only cause assigned for his severe illness, was fretting respecting the victim of his illicit passion, and having taken to hard drinking, in order to drown cares.

To paint our despair, is impossible, yet we hid
the

the emotions of our heart, and bestowed on him the most assiduous and tender care and attention. His mind, at times, seemed subdued to the utmost state of debility. He would see no company, mix in no amusements, and often wandered in his ideas. On one occasion, he conjured me to marry Fidelio, to which, I naturally answered, that I must first wait to be asked. He smiled at this; and this was the first time I saw him smile.

All this time, Fidelio was more a brother or a friend to him, visiting him daily, and passing the greater part of his time with him. Indeed, he abstracted a part from me, to bestow it on my brother; and, although this certainly was not lover-like, yet I valued him for it. My brother made him the confidant of the inmost secrets of his heart, and used frequently to talk of his unfortunate victim, from which, strange to tell! he received relief, just as the

soldier

soldier beguiles the agony of his wound, by conversing on how he got it, and seems to share his pain with a comrade, when describing its nature. On one occasion, when weaker and suffering more than ever, he assured Fidelio how sincerely he regretted his seduction of her innocence; and that he would cheerfully make restitution, by marrying her, were she not gone into a cloister and beyond his power.

His malady still gained ground, and he was worn to a skeleton, when an enterprize, worthy the spirit and chivalry of our Knights and Pilgrims of old, entered Fidelio's brain. He conceived that the sight of the lovely victim would restore my brother's health; and that, if her noviciate were not over, he might still restore her to society, repair the injury she had received, ally her to my brother, and make a whole family to rejoice. But first, he had two great difficulties to surmount: our family pride, and her remo-

val from the convent. The latter he determined on, let the risk be his life; the former he had still to combat. He accordingly applied to my mother and to myself, using all the rhetoric in his power; and he was agreeably undeceived, by gaining our consent, as we considered that my brother's life depended on it. He next imparted his plan to my brother, assuring him, that he should start for Marseilles that very night, and there take shipping for Minorca.

So overwhelmed was my brother by such unexampled, heroic friendship, that he grew delirious with surprize and joy, and Fidelio could not leave his bed-side that night: but, restored to his reason, he shed tears of gratitude over his matchless friend, and he grew hourly better after Fidelio's departure,—not that he hoped to see the object of his love and of his crime, since he considered her as devoted to religion; but that he could now safely lay his hand upon his

his heart, and say that he had tried every means of restitution in his power, and was ready to make it, in the most honorable way, if she were still in the world and free from more solemn obligations. If otherwise, Fidelio had orders to inform the Abbess of what had passed, and to abide by her judgment as to the time and manner of communicating the same to his beloved fair, studying her tranquillity and resignation above all other things.

Fidelio was now ready to depart, and I confess that, whilst his constancy and heroism amazed and charmed me, his absence, for his society had now become quite a habit, grieved me most sensibly. I now quite forgave all his prosing, and felt more than I can express, and more than I thought myself capable of, à son égard. I was determined not to take leave of him; and I begged my mother to tell him, that a womanish weakness made all biddings of adieu

insup-

insupportable to me. I laid stress on the word *all*; and yet again I wished to say “ bidding *him* adieu!”— Alas! I dared not. In fine, I left my mother to say just what she pleased on the subject, only stipulating that I might be spared the heavy-hearted word adieu. That sound falls from the tongue, like the last leaf of summer from the tree; it sounds like a passing bell; it echoes on the ear, like sounds returned in sepulchral cloisters, where the living, for a moment, mingle with the dead, or as Swift so beautifully says in his matchless Poem on “ Waterloo,” is
“ Like the first falling clay, upon the coffin flung.”

My mother made my request to Fidelio; but he had a request of his own to urge: it was an interview with me, promising, at the same time, not to say the fatal word adieu, nor to take leave in any shape. When my mother communicated this intelligence,

gence, it gave me pain, I confess, for I thought myself free from this afflicting interview. My mother's mysterious air also alarmed me; and a foreboding told me that Fidelio and I should never meet again. I could almost have refused to see him; but what a return was this for all his faith and services! I feared a repetition of his leaving his will with us; I felt unequal to the conflict; and I dreaded my own weakness above every thing else.

It was now eight o'clock. He had left us but for two hours; he was to return at nine; and his travelling carriage was ordered to our door at ten. This order, however, I prevailed upon him to alter. He was to meet his carriage in an adjoining street; for the very expiring sound of the carriage wheels, which bear away a sincere friend, is fraught with anguish and despair. I never spent so long an hour in

in my life: it seemed an age. At last ten o'clock struck; and no Fidelio! Every moment now was an hour; and yet I dreaded its expiring. Five minutes past ten! and I heard his usual knock.—But as this part of the subject is most serious, let me ponder a moment and recall the past.

What was Fidelio to me? a modest admirer, an undeclared lover,—one who by habit had grown into complete brotherhood,—a young man so steady, that his counsels were as valuable as those of the most experienced age. Yet he was something more! He was the friend, the champion of the family,—had poverty been our lot, he would have been its benefactor,—nay, did not our pride forbid it, we might have received essential pecuniary assistance from him. In short—I communed with my heart, and I scarcely knew how to consider him,—in what relation to us,

or

or how sufficiently to estimate his worth. Would that he had said more or less to me! He now was quite an undetermined something..

CHAPTER III.

THE painful separation now was to take place ; for although we had agreed upon not *saying* adieu, our hearts felt it. To paint these sort of scenes, is very difficult ; and, when done, in the best manner which we are able, is often, to those who have not felt, on similar occasions, ridiculous.

In addition to the common mutual promises made, souvenirs given and received, assurances of remembrances, and looks which say more than volumes could paint, Fidelio solicited the promise of my hand, should he return. Another would have asked it previous to his going, and either have served me as his bride, leaving me under the charge of a mother, or have taken me with him ; but my swain did nothing like

like ordinary men ; and therefore, he would not subject me to the fatigues of a long journey, on a commission difficult to execute and fraught with peril, to be performed hastily, and of course with much inconvenience : neither would he leave me the widow of a day, to pine for his return and to be pointed at as the *nouvelle mariée*.

He chose, therefore, to claim my promise merely in case of his return, leaving me free, if any accident should happen to him ; and he again left his will with us, and made me his heiress, in case a premature fate should be his. I shall never forget our parting. He stayed with me until midnight ; he went to the door half a dozen times, and then returned again. At length, the sound of twelve alarmed him. He almost upbraided himself for losing two hours in my brother's cause ; and I understood, by his letters, that he paid enormously in order to tempt the post-

boys to drive immoderately through the night. He is gone! the best and the most eccentric of men!

I slept none that night, and I upbraided him for his austere conduct. He might have taken me with him. I would have gone. I felt somehow, in his absence, like a widow and a wife, restrained in my actions, uncomfortable in my situation. My mother and I talked, at large on the subject, on the ensuing day; and she again called his conduct heroic. Dear friend, to whom I dedicate and address this work, thou knowest me well; to thee, I can say any thing; from thee, I can conceal nothing:—de bonne foi donc, I could have wished him less of the hero, less of the Platonic, and more of the lover and of the man.—But he is gone! My brother felt relieved by the mission which he was about to execute; my mother was incessantly praising and admiring him; I *only* was miserable.

Amongst

Amongst the other romantic tricks, which he played, he left me a letter, sealed with black, with the impression of his arms, and with a solemn injunction not to be opened unless he died. The idea attristed me; but the injunction and the seal made no impression on my mind further than to excite my womanish curiosity. I was determined to break the seal! this would be dishonorable in a *man*; but the woman is the weaker vessel, and must be pardoned many things. I therefore hit upon a plan, well known to most of my female readers, and a good hint to those who know it not. I made a bread seal, which received the exact impression of his arms; I took off the cast; I then melted the seal with a taper slowly and carefully, with a heated gold bodkin, held by a pair of tweezers in the light; I gently opened the cover; and, having read its contents, I sealed it again with my bread impression, however ill-bred or irregular in me.

Its contents were, advice, expressions of tenderness, and a request that I should marry Harry Wildish, if he did not return. I was horribly out of patience with this request, and hated Fidelio for about half an hour. I communicated the subject to my mother, who again called our friend a hero and a prodigy, was pleased to call me base and dishonorable for violating the secrecy of a seal, and threw my bread impression into the fire, which was of no earthly use, as I could take a hundred from the one on his letter whenever I pleased.

We received letters from Fidelio from Dover, from Calais, from Paris, and from Marseilles, in inconceivably short spaces of time. My brother mended daily; and I grew gradually more sociable and resigned to the loss of Fidelio's society. For a week, I played the inconsolable widow; but, on the eighth day, I began to see the folly of my conduct. No one

but my mother and my brother knew the promise given and taken betwixt us; and why should I shut myself up, create suspicion, and make myself the town-talk? For a moment, I even, for I am candid and tell the truth, repented a solemn obligation which abridged my freedom; but again my regard for Fidelio warranted the sacrifice, though not my exclusion entirely from the world. If man be not made for solitude, I am sure that woman is still less so. *Silence!* and solitude! how dreadful, how insupportable ye are to woman!

At the first public place which I went to, I met the Duke. He was extremely attentive. He staggered me a little; but still, in those attentions, there was a *je ne sais quoi* of worldliness which differed materially from his former assiduities and kindness. I felt myself, too, like a married woman, or rather I felt that I had all the uncomfortable restraint of one,

one, without her matron-like advantages. I often dreaded lest absence and time might change Fidelio, of so short duration is love. I then began to run over in my mind the unfortunate love matches ; and, as I was stringing a long list, the Duke of Bourbon's appearance brought a living example before my eyes.

This illustrious Prince, at the early age of fifteen, fell deeply in love with the daughter of a Duke of Orleans, much his superior in age. The marriage ceremony was performed ; but it was agreed by the parents of both parties, that the juvenile bride-groom should travel for a year or two, and that his bride should remain in a convent until his return. But as love laughs at locksmiths, the boyish lover stole his *nouvelle mariée* from the cloister, and their union, after the first separation, gave rise to a dramatic representation. Early and extravagant as

such love was, it scarcely held for eight years, at the expiration of which period, they separated, by mutual consent, and the Duke's universal gallantries have been pretty public, and not always in the first and most delicate classes of life.

A noble bard too, set out in his wedded career with all the madness and with all the inspiration of a Poet, as the following stanzas will fully prove. Yet how soon did a separation take place betwixt him and his partner; and what mutual bitterness has been cherished by each!

TO JESSY.

There is a mystic thread of life
So dearly wreath'd with mine alone,
That Destiny's relentless knife
At once must sever both or none.

There

There is a form, on which these eyes
Have often gazed with fond delight ;
By day that form their joy supplies,
And dreams restore it through the night.

'There is a voice, whose tones inspire
Such thrills of rapture in my breast ;
I would not hear a seraph choir,
Unless that voice could join the rest !

There is a face, whose blushes tell
Affection's tale upon the cheek ;
But pallid at one fond farewell,
Proclaims more love than words can speak.

There is a lip, which mine hath prest,
And none had ever press'd before ;
It vow'd to make me sweetly blest,
And mine—mine only, prest it more !

There is a bosom—all my own—
Hath pillow'd oft this aching head ;
A mouth—which smiles on me alone ;
An eye—whose tears with mine are shed.

There are two hearts, whose movements thrill
In unison so closely sweet ;
That, pulse to pulse, responsive still,
They both must heave or cease to beat.

There are two souls, whose equal flow
In gentle streams so calmly run—
That when they part—they part!—ah, no!
They cannot part—those souls are one !

Lady W——d was a love match, and yet how soon was she supplanted by Mrs. R——n ! All these ideas were frightful; and I had now no convenient beau to be the companion of my morning rides, and to give

give me his arm in public. I was fearful lest the taking of another should give cause for scandal, or cause my sermonizing friend a moment's uneasiness if he returned—a thing which I always doubted; and at the same time, I considered that, if I flirted with many, the case would be still worse, and shut myself I could not.

As it was, the tongue of ill report spared me not. In some circles, it was hinted that I had used Fidelio very ill, and refused him for a richer swain, and that he was gone home broken-hearted. Others alleged that he had ruined his fortune by frequently assisting my mother and brother, and that he was gone abroad, in order to repair his dilapidated finances. A third *charitable on dit* was, that Harry Wildish and Fidelio had quarrelled about me, and that now, neither would have me. I really got hardened to

all these detractions and to the merciless vituperations of our *friends* and acquaintances ; and I am convinced that there are fashionables who, from being so long and so much misrepresented, at last become unfeeling and actually *are* the thing which they were represented to be whilst unimpeachable in their conduct ; for vice first wishes you to be evil, and then paints you as such prematurely, taking its chance for our future probable alterations.

A letter received from Minorca put my brother in excellent spirits. The faithful friend had arrived at his destination, and had ascertained the fact of the heroine of the adventures still being in existence. The run-away plan had yet to be executed ; but my brother's mind was at ease, as he was convinced that the purity of his intentions were already made known by his incomparable ambassador. He therefore

now

now resolved to go into public, which was very gratifying to me, since I no longer required a protector.

The first place which my brother and I visited together, was the play. Drury Lane was crowded to excess, and, to use the vulgar expression,—all the world was there. Poor Fidelio! when humming Robin Adair, he came into my head :

“ What, when the play was o'er—

“ What made my heart so sore?”

And yet I was every thing but in love with him. I esteemed him too much for a lover or for a gallant. He was too *stupid*—no, that is not the term—too serious for the one, and too good for the other. But, as the first act of the play is over, we will put him off for a future occasion.

Nothing puts off time and reflection like change of scene, else would our theatres not be so crowded.

CHAPTER IV.

ON our way to the stage-box, we met with our Exquisite-Guardsman, and his bride on his arm. He had returned from passing a fortnight in Paris, whither he went from the church-door. His choice is a rich widow, about thirty, and very handsome, good-humoured, and quite a woman of the world. "Colonel," cried I, for his promotion and his marriage took place in the same *Gazette*, "I wish you joy! So I see that it was *not too much trouble* to get married." He here introduced his wife to us. "Yes," answered he, "it would have been so if Lady — had not courted me, and I said yes to *save trouble*." She smiled. "She would," continued he, "have me; and I said very well; be always, as now, good tempered, and we shall do vastly well together, for you know that I cannot be troubled with quarrelling."

Lady

Lady — and I now shook hands. “ He is,” said the amiable widow, “ no changeling. He takes it very easy, letting me think for him, act for him, and provide for him; but he has a will of his own”— “ Which,” interrupted he, “ very seldom appears, merely because it is too much trouble. I let my rib here, do what she likes; she does the same by me; and thus are we better off than the rest of our neighbours; but come into our box, or we will give it up and go into your’s, and we will enjoy our own anecdotes, and cut the trouble of attending to the d——d play.

We agreed upon the latter; and he, giving his lady in charge to my brother, cried “ Here, *mon compagnon d’armes*, take this gentlewoman off my hands, and I will faire *l’amiable* with your sister. We should be scouted by the fashionables if man and wife were to be seen arm in arm and tête-à-tête at a play.” Lady

— threw her arm into my brother's, with well-bred ease and good humour, smiling, at the same time, on her Colonel, which proved that they were in mutual intelligence. Shall I be thus treated, said I to myself, when I am bound by the iron bonds of wedlock? How should I like it too? I pondered awhile, and was relieved by reflecting that these arrangements, in high life, are merely matters of outward form, and affect not the interior either of the heart or of the ménage.

Whilst I was conversing with the Colonel, I was, notwithstanding, so interested on the subject of matrimony, that I watched every look of his and of Lady ——'s,—the result of which was, that I discovered, through all the hidden game of fashionable independence and indifference, a mutual, well understood regard, a tranquil confidence, an easy friendship, which promised much felicity.

Lady

Lady —— is a woman of good sense, which is the main point; she appears to rattle and to laugh at love and conjugal courtship before company, an odious thing by the bye; yet she perfectly well knows how to make *home* happy. She married a mad peer first, whose race was short; but she learned experience, and now knows how to keep alive the flame which her attractions have lighted up. Besides she has a fine fortune, and keeps a most hospitable house, both of which suit the Colonel, à merveille.

He too is a man of the world, good tempered and well-bred, and, although his affection is of the superlative degree, it is so well known to Lady ——, that she cannot complain of it. If, therefore, he commit any peccato, it will be a peccato celato; and Lady —— took an opportunity of saying to me, in private, how much a woman's happiness depended on herself, assuring me that, if she knew that the Colonel committed

mitted *une petite infidélité*, she should seem blind to it, and redouble her attentions, convinced that the heart would not be of the party. This might serve as a lesson to me; but, I confess that my mind is not quite made up on that subject.

Looking and nodding about us at the play, the most striking characters of our acquaintance first struck us. Others were made known to us by inquiry. Little are the votaries of pleasure, in high life, aware, that, whilst they go to see and be seen, they also go to dissect their friends and to be dissected in turn.

Scarcely can a fashionable, now o' days, name another, without the outline hints of his or her character. For instance—that is Lady so and so, of gallant notoriety; or that is the Countess, who, at an early period, made a runaway match with so and so,—

poor

poor thing ! she has had time and cause to repent it ;— or, who's that ? Lord you must know, it's — who so early entered into wedlock's fetters, which, *entre nous*, perhaps addressed to a paramour, set tight enough upon some people, and have not very much confined her Grace or her Ladyship.

Then, one man is known by his mistress, and another by his horse, or by his particular foible. Some are chronicled in the papers and *tried* over again by an Opera-box jury, or by a full *bench* at a concert, where less mercy may be expected, than in a court of law, and where evidences are neither sworn nor cross-examined—are neither upon oath nor upon honor, and are amenable to no tribunal for the sum of their account. There is, perhaps, no ordeal more difficult to pass, than an avenue made through beaux and belles, to attain your carriage at some of our public places, or even through the crowded

crowded ranks of scrutinizing and inquisitorial great folks at a levee or at a drawing-room.

Disappointed elderlies, of both sexes, men of the world as they are called, whose hearts are wasted and who are artificial in every feeling, and fallen stars who fain would bring all down with them, are most severe reviewers to pass before; and, if they touch more lightly and more elegantly than the tomahawkers of the Edinburgh Review, they wound not less dangerously. But let us look at the company.

In the stage-box opposite sat a variety of characters. The masquerade scarcely offered a greater diversity. Masks without dominos, and dominos without masks, are to be met with every where. On this occasion, we had a mélange of the princely and diplomatic, of the titled and purely fashionable, of the old and young, the grave and gay, the married

and

and unmarried, the ruiners and the ruined, clergy and laity, frail and fair; but I must endeavour to put some order amongst them, a thing bien difficile, as they well know.

Lord C—— was one of the first on whom the criticising party gave a lecture on heads. This was cruel; for it happens to be his Lordship's weak part. What a falling off from a father and a brother! Yet did family influence and ministerial influence literally make a *great gun* of him, by placing him at the head of the —— at one time, and, at another, by giving him the command of a great army. “The *report*, however, added not to his fame,” said the dissecting Baronet, who pointed him out. “His expedition might fairly be called a *flash in the pan*: it was like

“The King of France went up the hill

With twenty thousand men,

And when he came unto the top—

Why—he march'd 'em down again.”

Some very pleasant lampoons have been written both on his Lordship and on his expedition. It was not, however, a *lively* subject to all concerned; sickness and fatigue made *grave* men of many fine young fellows who accompanied it; and it is to be hoped it will be a lesson against favoritism and party jobs. Time was when to be a two-bottle man, a man of appetite and a good teller of a story, particularly if serving in the Coldstream Guards, was recommendation enough for any *man, woman or child*, to the highest situations and to the most active service. Hence arises the voluminous list of our kept gentlemen, beardless commanders and dowager generals, those who, from old men are scarcely better than old women. But thanks to the last campaigns, and to the French who taught us how to beat them, we find the coffee-house staff retire upon their five hundred a year, and fight their battles at the Piazza or at the

British

British, tell their feats to the fair sex, and retire at night under a discharge of *grape*.

At this moment General B—— made his appearance. "There," cried the Barouet, "this man just comes to furnish an example, a ci-devant silver stick, the son of a wine merchant in France (a bankrupt too I believe), and married in the wine trade too, a man whose language is as vulgar as any Pat who hands you along from White's or from the Cocoa-tree to an hotel or to your house, and whom a certain wag used to call the *Pole-ish corps*,—a man who cannot write a letter, and who never saw a shot fired but on a rejoicing day! yet must he have his rank and a pension, and look, for he is tall enough, down upon old colonels grown grey in the service and covered with wounds.

Not that this London general has not grown
grey.

grey. He is certainly one of the iron greys; but his services have been confined to the Cyprian corps, to whom he is as gross as he is economical and unwelcome, and to some severe showers of hail and of rain in the three Parks.

That, however, the race may not be lost, the general has got his puny son into his old corps, and the poor boy, when contrasted with his Patagonian privates, looks like an inhabitant of Lilliput, the claw of a lobster, or a little farthing rush-light put out by an immense and ponderous extinguisher of a helmet not very unlike Mambrino's, which *puts out* the poor boy terribly, and that in more lights than one: first, it puts him *nearly* out of sight; secondly, it ought to put him out of countenance; and thirdly, it puts soldiering out of fashion.

“ There is nothing,” concluded Sir —,

“ which

“ which I hate more than to see our guard-ensigns just come out of the measles, or our dragoon-children just come from school. How many should be sent back to the nursery and to a tutor ; yet, however, their fault is daily amending, whilst the old children are incurable and incorrigible.” “ Will you take a pinch of snuff, Colonel,” said he to my brother : and, looking at a tall impudent Hibernian of high military rank, whom we have already had on the tapis, “ this is pure Irish blackguard !”

Lady H——, next passed in review. She bowed to me. One of our neighbours was pleased to enlarge upon her gallantry, her dissipation and her beauty, and to add that she had appeared in a certain satirical novel under the nom de guerre, just as if she had seen service, of Lady Dovecote. But as she is a particular friend of mine, I drew off the attack, by pretending not to know the Reverend Mr.

M——,

M——, and so spared my fair and very good natured friend.

“ That Reverend,” said the last speaker, “ can write a love-letter and make a pas Bouré better than he can compose a homily. Poverty and experience have taught him the former, and his capering wife must have instructed him in the latter. Very early in life, he got very much in debt; and, whilst at Oxford, considering that Hudibras was correct in saying,

“ Oh! what an amorous thing is want!

“ How debts and mortgages enchant!”

he penned a most florid love-letter to a certain Scotch Duke’s daughter, who, being very plain, but very sensible, saw the hoax and refused him most indignantly; knowing that Abraham Newland would be more welcome to him than a matrimonial alliance. The fat natural daughter of a late Governor, sister

to

to a late nabob and wife to a foreign Count, not married however then, struck him as a fine morceau for a hungry man ; and he accordingly laid siege to her ; but, as she departed on the will of her brother, he was disappointed in the *cut and come again*, which he promised himself.—The nabob furnishing the former, and the latter being denied to the parson.

The flattery, however, which he had contrived to instill into the lady's ear, had *melted* her to compassion for him, unguentous bodies being easily *fused* ; and she, on the day of her marriage with the lucky foreigner, gave the Reverend some hundred pounds, by way of a marriage fee, which ceremony he performed most impressively.

As all the world's a stage, he turned his views towards the stage, for a partner, and a dancing one too, and he married the active Miss G——, the daughter

daughter of a barber, who now does another kind of *job* entirely, namely driving, very awkwardly, a stage close and shaving the kirb-stone so closely, that the foot passengers threaten to *lather* him daily. The Reverend's pride is, doubtless, much gratified, by marrying one whose well-turned limbs, fine ankle, and active and elastic movements have been so generally and so publicly admired, and who has been seen with so much rapture through the Opera glasses of the antiquated connoisseurs and decrepid debauchees of fashion.

“The honorable George Touchy ! by all that’s wonderful,” cried our Colonel, seeing a person enter the upper boxes incog. A few years ago he was in the wrong box, added he, being in the company of the twin-brothers-in-law, John Doe and Richard Roe not a hundred miles from Chancery Lane—Hem !—He knows something about pictures.—But of that no

more. He has now perhaps got a family-picture, having changed his estate, or rather his state, by matrimony. "I like him not," cried ——. "Why?" "Because he is a bad son." Then, turning round, in preaching mood, he thus addressed us,

"When we hear a son abuse or despise his father, he never gains from us what he expects, esteem or pity ; but insures himself disgust and disapprobation. However narrowed Lord ——'s, resources may be, it is unbecoming in his son to expose them, or to endeavour to increase difficulties ; and we think it would have been as seemly to have adopted prudent economy and to have followed up the noble profession of arms, as to have involved his circumstances, separated his interests from his father's, and lived ingloriously abroad like so many others of our idle and embarrassed nobility and gentry, until things *"come round,"* as they call it. Whether this phrase has

has any connection with his taking unto himself a wife, we know not ; but we fear that it rather signifies, until the demise of the present Peer, which, as I both know, esteem, and pity him, I hope he will be long disappointed in. Very probably his errand to town is either to raise money, or to enquire if his father be dead—shocking!"

"Here is an *échappé*, to my knowledge," cried the first speaker,—“a ruler, not in the Senate, but in the Bench! Four and sixpence, I presume, has purchased his freedom for the day, stamped upon a piece of paper, given by the deputy marshal, who has risen to high emolument, by the captivity and slavery of others. Not a bad fellow though, I am informed! But, to return to this *Exquisite-debtor*, he belongs to the A—— family, a *genus* distinct from other houses, and I rather think that he looks for a title. He has borrowed a wife,—he was always a

famous hand at borrowing ; and he swaggers about Bedlam-wall, St. George's Fields, the London Road, &c. with a parcel of ready made children, as proudly as a rustic, just come to *Lunnon*, does with a ready made suit of clothes. The Colonel too rides a war-horse, in the circumscribed limits of his domain, writes challenges, and figures in the newspapers.

“ If you observe, these day-rulers always court notoriety, for fear that you should not think they were going about, little reflecting that every body knows their circumstances and their quarters. This was particularly the case with Colonel de B——, another honorable, with B—— A——, and with many others.”

Herc Kemble was pouring out his hoarse but impressive note. “ Do let us listen to one scene of the play,” said I; “ all eyes are upon us; and we shall

shall be hissed as nuisances." "Very well; *one scene!*" said our Exquisite-Colonel; "but, upon my soul it is too much trouble to attend to more; one knows it all by heart; and no one comes to hear the play now o'days."—(Loud applause at Kemble's acting.) "How noisy the rogues are!" lisped out our Exquisite again. "These are people who come to see the play; and who will have their penny-worth for their penny. I see my bootmaker's foreman; two of my tailor's apprentices, and a certain straw-bonnet-maker, a ci-devant subaltern favourite of mine, (a general laugh.) Upon my life, half my tradesmen are here; so it is as well that I have paid my last two years' bills, and am in strength and credit again."

Walter —, the minstrel, was discerned in a side-box, violently affected at Kemble's tragic muse. He wept so loud, that he was at first taken for a child, until this same Border-minstrel, at full length,

was discerned. A popular feeling, favourable to a man of genius and of high talent, manifested itself around him ; but he did not get off *Scot-free* from our side of the house ; and, be it known that, at the play-house, there is as much party as in the House of Commons. *Wat-o'the-Cleuch*, or rather *Wat-o'the-Glen*, was now dissected, and he was blamed for running off his verses, sometimes carelessly, at so much per line. This habit has introduced some miserable slip-shod lines, in the midst of his border-beauties and the flowers of his imagination.

His history was now entered upon ; and it was alleged that, if he had merely continued a limb of the law, he would have been able to give but a *lame* account of himself. But the blending of family history, of border-transactions, and of well-timed flattery with his lines, had a happy effect, both as to his reputation and as to his purse. Nor was “ The full cousin to the

bold

bold Buccleuch," the most unlucky stroke of Watt's pen. The Highland and Border Lairdies, with—

“ Sir David Lindsay of the mount,

“ Lord Lion King at Arms,”

at their head, were not a little delighted to see themselves in print, to read themselves in rhyme, and to be thus made to travel, *sooth*, with a good account of their families. The Vision Don Roderic is amongst the worst of his productions, and it is evident that he writes too much. As a biographer he does not stand on a par with himself as a poet; and it is strongly insinuated that, not content with the legitimate child of his own bright imagination, which never fails to delight the public, he has been, of late, fathering the offspring of others. Suspicion glances at an *exiled Corydon*, whose works are said to be finished off, and the press corrected by this popular poet.

The thus related biography of Walter, ended by

an eulogium on his private character. "What think you of his Border songs?" said a Scotch Laird in the next box. "They sometimes *border* on the ridiculous," replied our severe friend.

The *Dandy* Lion now appeared in person. There is certainly a mixture of ferocity and of affectation, of vulgarity and of Dandyism, of bravery and of the spirit of Captain Bobadil, which are not easy to reconcile. It is singular how some men get a character, and, once obtaining it, whether by their eccentricity or otherwise, they quite fancy themselves *something* in society. So it is with the fierce Colonel, who, by the bye, got roughly handled by the odious commissary. The hirsute appearance of the former's face, seems, however, to be his greatest merit; this is hanging our fame and fortune upon a *hair*, with a witness.

The Colonel got his own consent to be married to an heiress some years back; but that *was all*. A little more modesty and retirement, would have been just as well for the Colonel; for he has not made the very best figure in print, where he has been handled not much more gently, than by the enraged commissary. Amongst many other attacks upon the Dandilion, an odious name and *resembling* that of an odious weed, where English epithet won't bear mentioning, the following was inserted at the bottom of a long article in a severe and witty publication lately current. "Whatever be the fate of this *soi disant* hero, at his Court Martial, we would advise him, whilst putting his whiskers on the *peace-establishment*, to place his tongue, at the same time, on the *court list*."

The *Lion* now left an opposite side-box, and made place for a character, long forgotten in the world, although once enjoying great notoriety as an

author and editor, and as a fashionable. This was no other than Major T——, better known, in his day, by the name of the tip-top adjutant. He was before my time ; but my mother remembers him in the Life Guards. Like the King of the Dandies, he got into notoriety, by his dress ; but to do the former justice, he is a well dressed man, although trussed, like a goose for the spit, laced in like a lady, and half strangled with cravat ; but the tip-top adjutant never was any thing but ridiculous in his style, a pigeon's crop, a docked tail to his coat discovering huge limbs, his under-hung jaw and the shell work of small curls on his head, with a frill in front, pulled out like Bannister's in 2 3 5 8, must have given him a very preposterous appearance.

He had a flipperry in writing, et voila tout ; but he was the *best collector of reports* of any adjutant ancient or modern, and by that means, added to no

want

want of front, he set up a newspaper, which had a most extensive sale. It is supposed that his great motive was to make a fortune for an unfortunate actress, now no more, and, when she died, he dropped the paper. He is now a Magistrate, a Major of Volunteers, a keen and a good sportsman in *coursing*, training his dogs for that purpose with peculiar care. Two natural daughters, accomplished and fine horse-women, occupy his paternal attention; and he now lives retired from the world, and from all its pomps and vanities.

“ That is by no means all,” observed a critic on my left hand; “ the Major means to shine in print again. Scribbling is too much the rage for him to escape the infection. His cabinet occupation, is, we are informed, the compilation of a *History of his own life*. If the Major candidly publishes the varied scenes which he has witnessed, and of which he may say

“ Quo-

“Quorum pars magna sui,” the publication will teem with fun, frolic and many a merry tale. This reminds one of Foote the actor, to whom a friend observed that he had written his thoughts on various subjects. “I am thinking,” added he, “of publishing a second edition.” “You are right,” replied Foote, “for second thoughts are best.”

For a very few minutes, the play divided our attention, or rather we *seemed* to attend to the play for a moment, just for “the idea of the thing,” as a certain peer incessantly says. We soon, however, returned to scandal, to canvassing the merits and demerits of the ladies’ dresses, and to biographizing our neighbours, without the permission of dedication or publishing.

“It’s a dozen years,” exclaimed my brother, on seeing an elderly man come into the back row of the

the opposite stage-box, “since I was at that man’s splendid seat in the north of England, where, fancying himself a *grand Seigneur*, he had a train de chasse, a fauconerie, a harem, and I don’t know what all. He is a very extraordinary man, and has got on in life, with a fortune, it is true, but with an air of expense which would have required a principality. It is strange that, in common with Colonel Eclipse, he should like to keep a military title, from which he was dismissed for misconduct. Such a title seems to me, not, certainly, like a *nom de guerre*, but like a name of derision, just as the calling a *noseless* man, nosey, is adding insult to the injury which he has sustained ; but the field-rank is proudly acceptable to both these heroes.

“ The Colonel in question, not Colonel Strongbow, but Colonel *Longbow*, has a great hankering after principalities. He bought his noble Yorkshire estate

of a Prince of the blood ; and, now, in the decline of life, he swears (for he swears like a legion of devils ; Corporal Trim's army of martyrs was a joke to it) that he has got a Dukedom as a principality in France. But every thing that is his, is wonderful, and, when brought to the hammer, or sold by *private* contract, a mode which he preferred, would fetch a devil of a price. His guns went off and killed of themselves ; his bows brought down any thing which he pleased ; he had rifles which killed across the channel ; and dogs which could do every thing but solve a problem in Euclid ; his horses, though lean, and not numerous, could, like their master, get *over every thing, even a horse-whipping* ; and his seraglio of Ladies, was the most wonderful exhibition of the *fare*.

“ In short, the Colonel, by hard swearing and hard living, by excellent manœuvring, and by *hocus pocus*, has passed through life in the most wonderful way.”

way. As for himself, if you may believe him, Gulliver, Munchausen, Don Quixotte, and Jack the Giant Killer were mere school-boys to him."—Here the gentlemen whispered and laughed, so that there was an end of my direct information. I overheard something about a *flint*, and a flogging, and a race, and a bubble bit, about a Lady Grimstone, and a singular cure for a fever, by a new sudorific. My male readers will probably make out this; and if they cannot, they must excuse me for my ignorance on the subject."

My head ached a little, and I leaned forward, applying my hand to my temple, when the tattling of the next box came confusedly on the organ of hearing. "She indeed!" cried a very highly painted lady, "She a proper guardian for her own child! Certainly not. Why she will sell her a bargain, or make a *cher ami* of her husband elect. The child's to be pitied." "Have you seen the Member's dramatic piece?"

piece?" said a Clergyman. "Yes, and be d——d to it;" replied a bold youth. "Why so, Sir?"—"Why it is d——d, as all such pieces will be." He alluded to Mr. L. the spruce Senator and would-be Author; it may be said of him, as of Mr. Davies in the Rolliad—

—————“Upon my life,
That Davies has a mighty pretty wife.”

Not that Lady * * * * * * * * * * * * * * is strictly pretty, but pleasing. The case in point merely is, that some men get their reputation from their wife, even if she lose it; 'tis all in the family way.

“The handsome female on the left,” said the Guardsman, “is the young widow C——. She is very beautiful, and she knows that she is so. Since her husband's death, she has resided with her parents, who have a splendid establishment, not far from Portman Square. She is a most incautious devotee

of

of the Cytherean goddess, and thinks that her pursuits are unknown, because of the *silk veil* which she generally makes use of; but it is of *British* manufacture, and, for her purpose, less serviceable than that of many foreign nations. She, not long since, cast her warm looks on Lord C——e, and having traced his residence, which was not very far from her own, sent a letter by her maid, Mrs. —, to request an appointment. Unluckily the letter was put into the hands of his lady, who desired Mrs. — to be shewn up stairs, when, to her utter confusion, she saw the *honorable* dilemma both her mistress and herself were placed in. Lord C——'s lady wrote an answer, in his Lordship's name, acknowledging his sense of her partiality, but that the delicate situation of Lady C——, who was then very near her time, prevented his acceptance of her favors. In fact, Lord C——e never knew of her solicitation. I chanced to pass her residence soon afterwards, and saw her notable, confi-

idential

idential woman, Mrs. ——, at a back window, communicating, by signals, with a young man, to whom she threw out a billet doux, wrapped in a white handkerchief with a stone in it. I shook my head at her, and exclaiming (greatly to her discomfiture) very bad ! very bad ! continued my walk.

“ There—that is Dr. S——n. He is very clever in his profession ; but I fear he will never get to the top of it, he devotes so much of his time to the gaming table. There is young C——, whose reverend relative, now no more, used to figure away at the fête of the courtesan Mrs. ——, in North Baker-street. The next is Capt. D'E——, of royal extraction. At Brighton, he is an inseparable of Mrs. C——s ; but they are not so conspicuous in town.

“ Look at that dowager. She is a perfect gentlewoman, and, advanced as she is in years, she still

still possesses abundant fascination. Her suavity, her politeness, her fashionable ease and an unobtrusive condescension, which, without compromising her own dignity, insures the comfort of every one, however humble, within her circle, cannot fail to command respect and esteem. In her more youthful days, she attracted the notice of a great personage at Brighton. Sir —— ——, her husband, had gone to London, and she was to follow the next day, when her manorato sent to engage her to go, in his party, to the Rooms. Her Ladyship stated truly that the Baronet was gone, and that all her wardrobe being on its way to town, she had nothing but her riding-habit which she had on, and consequently could not go. The gentleman would take no denial, insisting on taking her in his own carriage, and, when she positively refused that, he said he would meet her at the door, and hand her up the room. But Lady ——'s prudence was not inferior to her beauty. When she apprised

apprised Sir —— of the circumstance, he good naturedly rebuked her, saying that invitations from that quarter were always considered commands, and that she ought, in all such cases, to give way; to which she pleasantly rejoined,—Indeed Sir ——, then the next time I meet his —— I shall know how to act.

“ That is Nathan, the celebrated composer of the Hebrew Melodies to Lord Byron’s beautiful words. I was highly delighted the other night with his performance of *God save the Regent*, a new national song, at a military party at Rochester, where it excited such enthusiasm as is not often produced; but you will soon be able to form your own judgment of it, for it will be all the rage this winter. It cannot fail to gratify the illustrious personage whom it celebrates.—To be sure, I heard it to great advantage, for he played the pianoforte and sung one part, with

his

his matchless pupil Miss Hill, who I predict, will ere long bring English singing into fashion."

My mother said she was particularly rejoiced that she should have an opportunity of encouraging native musical talent, and that she would not fail to request the assistance of Miss Hill and her master, at her ensuing concert.

"In the corner," continued our guardsman, "is Admiral N——t and his daughter. How he doats upon her, and yet how like she is to the Duke of C——, who had an illicit connection with her mother. There are some circumstances which implicate another illustrious personage. I could tell such a story about a letter—perhaps he knows not of its existence—yet I have a clue to its deposition, and should it ever come to light, what an exposure must take place! but I had better

better go no further ; for I have attracted the attention of the *vulgar* !

“ Look at Lady ——, she is very pretty, but her countenance betrays somewhat of mama’s irritability. Before her mother married Lord S. she was at a public breakfast at Hanover Square rooms, where her beau amused himself with flirting with Miss —, a supposed rival. Now this young lady was a pale beauty. The former unable to restrain the violence of her feelings, even in public, thus accosted her rival. “Indeed —indeed Miss — you are very pretty—very pretty indeed—but you have one defect, which this (giving her a violent slap in the face) will remedy.” Both ladies then burst into a flood of tears, the effect of injury and vexation, and they were hurried out of the room by their mamas. Jealousy ! jealousy ! but I will neither moralize nor philosophize. I am not

old enough to remember this scene myself, but Mr. E. who told it to me, was present on the occasion. Ah! Lady Glenarvon there! She took it into her head to be so pleased with a band of Savoyards, that she sent for them into the hall of —— House, and thence into the drawing-room. Her noble father-in-law, at dinner, remonstrated on the impropriety of introducing such persons into a drawing-room, and Lady G. waxing warm with the subject, dutifully threw her plate, with its contents, at his Lordship's head! It was an involuntary impulse of irritation. Lord —— left the room, and Lady Glenarvon, as her impetuosity subsided, was, no doubt, very sorry for her extravagant behaviour.

“ Next to Lady Glenarvon is squash Perry.— What an absurd figure he made lately, in denying that his brother-in-law, Professor Porson, wrote “ *Eloisa in Deshabille*;” when, there is no doubt, he must have

have not only heard it from his own lips, but *seen* it *under his own hand*, repeatedly. However Mr. Perry may deny it, all the world believes it *now*, and many have convinced themselves of it, by ocular demonstration, at Stockdale's. Have you yet to learn that "Prudence is the better part of valour?" Our friend Perry is, *however*, a very able man."

The Clergyman now took up the conversation, and pointed out Col. St. P——, whose father, he said, had been very painfully circumstanced. He was in the Guards, and, one night at Vauxhall, looking into a box where some young bloods were at supper, one of them caught hold of him, and insisted that he should drink a glass of burnt Champagne. He resisted for some time, till finding them noisy and intoxicated, he agreed to take it. On this he was required to eat a beef-sandwich, which he also reluctantly acceded to. It was seasoned with mustard, to which, having a great aver-

sion,

sion, he positively refused. On this, one more furious than the rest, observed, that he never knew a man eat beef without mustard, who was not a scoundrel. As they all seemed drunk, St. P—— pretended both to eat and drink, and went off. One of his companions, also a brother officer, told this against St. P——, as a good joke, and he was, in consequence, sent to Coventry for a coward. Finding matters assume so very serious an aspect, he attempted, by public and private offers of reward, to discover the Vauxhall bloods, saying he would fight them all in succession. They, however, kept their own counsel. He then declared that if ever he should have an opportunity of redeeming his character by a duel, either his antagonist or he should fall.

“ Some time after, it happened that his particular friend, Mr. R——n, and himself, courted Miss G——, a young lady of fortune, and St. P. gave her a

bonbonnière, which he soon afterwards saw in the hands of his friend, who said Miss G—— gave it him. This led to an inquiry, when Miss G—— stated that Mr. R. forced it from her. Indignant at this, St. P. rose from table, and drove directly to Mr. R——n's in Berkley-square, and charged him with the *falsehood*. It was, at this time, customary with gentlemen, in evening dress, to wear swords. The friends, each taking a candle, adjourned to another room, and, at the first pass, Mr. R—— was run through the body, and fell. St. P. instantly quitted the house and fetched Mr. Ranby, a surgeon of great eminence, who, declaring the wound mortal, St. P—— fled to France. In vain every possible interest was made with George II. for a pardon! His Majesty sternly refused it, saying, coupled with St. P.'s former resolve, it was too like assassination; [and, wearied by solicitations, at length declared he would disgrace any one who should presume to solicit him further on that head.

“ St.

“ St. P. finding his affairs thus hopeless in England, entered the Austrian service, and visited all the European Courts. He was afterwards Secretary to the Marquess of B——, the British Ambassador at Paris. On the accession of his present Majesty, George III. as no one prosecuted, he obtained, through the interest of the Marquess of B——, a free pardon. The polish his manners acquired, during a long residence in foreign Courts, acquired him the name of the polite Englishman. These manners particularly distinguished him to the time of his decease. I had this anecdote from himself.

“ There is Capt. E——. I have repeatedly heard the great Mr. Burke point out his father as the best bred man in Europe.”

An acquaintance of our clerical friend now pointed out a *model of perfection*. “ You see the op-

posite box, which is occupied entirely by a gentleman and his children. It is Lord K——, the upright son of an upright father. He had the misfortune, a few years back, to lose his consort, his very counterpart of perfection and virtue. His Lordship buried the greater part of his worldly happiness in her grave ; but, the best father in the world, he lives now for his children, to whom he not only does his own, but his lost partner's duty. I doubt whether another character, so perfect, exists—at least I have never met with one. Possessing nearly every virtue, he seems rigid to himself alone. He has always some kind consideration, some soothing palliation for the errors of his fellow-creatures, whom he considers in the light of Him “who desireth not the death of a sinner ; but rather that he should be converted and live.” His conduct is that of the apostle, to whom our Saviour said, “ Feed my sheep,”—a command which it is the great purpose of his life to fulfil. He probably

probably dispenses more money annually in charity, than any individual in the empire of ten times his fortune ; and his private beneficence far outdoes what he conceives it right to give publicly, for the sake of example. In short he is just not an angel of light, and his character may be summed up in the words of Pope,

“ To K——n every virtue under heaven.”

“ Close to his Lordship, in the adjoining box, is the eccentric Sir W. M——. His singular conduct, in regard to his electors, to whom he wrote, “ I bought you, and d——n you, I'll sell you,” you remember. Some few years since, he bought a house in Old Burlington-street, and shuffled so about the money, that Mr. E——t sent him a challenge ; but he would not go out. Some time afterwards he called on that gentleman, and requested he would get into his carriage to have some conversation, when, closing the door, he seized him by the collar. Mr. E——t instantly fell

upon him, and so thoroughly thrashed him, that he roared out for mercy, and called, in vain, to his own and the Earl of U——'s servants, who were gathered round and enjoying his distress, to assist him.

" The gentleman leaning forward is Mr. ——, the banker. Persons in his situation are frequently the accidental depositaries of pecuniary transactions of no small importance. One of these occurred not long since. A tradesman of hitherto unblemished reputation, of genteel appearance, and in good credit, not a hundred miles from St. James's-street, lost successively, night after night, at *Roubel's* infernal Hell, N° 40, Pall Mall, various sums, amounting, in the whole, to something so considerable, as to embarrass the concerns of the house. Not daring to consult any one on the cause of the deficiency, he imprudently and criminally forged a bill of exchange on a person from whom he was in the habit of receiving orders, intending to take

take it up before it became due. He, however, having made a mistake in the day on which it was payable, its presentation occasioned it to be detected. He was fortunate in falling into merciful hands, and the money having been replaced, the bill was humanely destroyed in his presence. We will be less communicative than the banker, and withhold the name, in the hope that it will prove a salutary warning to all,—though, in regard to the keeper of the gaming-table in question, we may indeed “hope humbly.”

“ The dashing young man on the other side, is the son of a linen-draper, not very distant from Oxford-street. *Hells* existed in his day, and either there, or elsewhere, he lost so much money, that he resolved to repair it by going upon the highway. He accordingly stopped a quaker, on his way from the corn-market, and after, he had taken from him no inconsiderable booty, insisted on having the quaker’s horse, a very

fine animal, likewise, and gave his own in exchange. Friend — ruminated some time on his loss, when it occurred to him to retrace his steps. On his entering Oxford-street, by the Uxbridge-road, he dismounted, and, giving the horse a cut with his whip, let him go. He soon saw that he knew his stable, the yard of which, after a few turns, he entered. The Quaker called for the hostler, and inquired who had had that horse. The hostler readily gave the name and address of Mr. —, who had hired it; but it was now late, and the Quaker obtained a bed for the night at a coffee-house. In the morning, at seven o'clock, he waited on the party, and was told by a boy who was sweeping the shop, that his master would be down in an hour. The Quaker seated himself in the parlour, and, on the linen-draper's entrance, accosted him with—"I have come for that money, friend, I lent thee last night." The trader, trembling from head to foot, said, "Certainly, Sir," and opening a bureau, placed

placed it in his hands, as also, on demand, an order for his better horse. The Quaker then gave him some cool advice no the risk he had incurred, by that mode of *borrowing* money, and, promising forgiveness, took his leave. It is satisfactory to add, that it proved a beneficial warning to the robber—and there is his son. Two very interesting narratives of this nature occur in the eighth edition of “The Pigeons,” by the author of “The Greeks.”

“ The Lady nearest the stage is Miss —— of —— Street, Portman Square. She is a very rich heiress, and was engaged to Captain —— ; but, happening to see an allusion to him, either in the Greeks, Pigeons, or some other of their author’s publications, she wisely instituted an enquiry respecting his gaming habits. He roundly asserted that it was false; but certain other circumstances combining against him, he shortly admitted the truth of it, in

part. Miss —— now forcibly assured him of her conviction, that a gamester was incapable of real affection, and dismissing him, gave orders to the servants that he should not, in future, be admitted. A few days afterwards, when a grand party was given, he succeeded in forcing his way about half up the staircase, whence he was thrown with considerable violence, and finally turned out of doors. Miss —— is now likely to have a partner more proportioned to her merits, and, at any rate, not yet, at least, devoted to that selfish, avaricious, and destructive crime."

A royal Duke now entering a private box, the *hopeful* son of a *rich demagogue* availed himself of his appearance to let off his sarcasms on the subject of Mrs. C——e. This brought out our Guard-exquisite, who, *troublesome* as it was, vindicated his patron, on the services he had rendered the army, and stated a circumstance highly to his credit even during his

his infatuation, viz. that Mrs. C——e, having assumed his livery, took up her residence, for a couple of days, near O——s, and, during her stay, made a point of traversing all the rides round the parks, where the D——s then was. The D—— of Y—— no sooner heard it, than he ordered the r——l liveries to be removed, and informed Mrs. C——e, that if she ever again went into the vicinity of O——s, he should take leave of her for ever. There is a delicacy to be observed even when in error.

“ The thin little man who struts in the box immediately above, is S——y, the tipstaff, of Chancery Lane. He has his tilbury, his saddle-horses, his side-saddle for Miss, when she comes home from boarding-school, his groom, his *picture gallery*, &c. The times have, of late, been particularly favorable to these gentry, who, almost to a man, now sport their chaises, and take their recreations, especially

in.

in the sporting season, with their dogs and their guns, and, when they have sense enough to keep silent, are sometimes even *mistaken* for gentlemen. One of these followers of the law once thrust a poker down the throat of an obstreperous prisoner: it passed through his back, and occasioned his death. It would reflect great honor on any member of the legislature who would bring in a bill to regulate the charges in these "*lock-up houses*," which exhibit, generally, scenes of plunder of the wretched and needy, which to "unfold would harrow up the soul." I think it must certainly be in the power of the sheriffs to regulate the conduct of their officers; but then I am told that they only hold their office for a year, which is too short a period for effecting a salutary reform, and therefore no one will make the attempt. In my opinion, if a good example were resolutely set, it would become popular, and be resolutely followed up. "*Il n'y a que le premier pas qui couture.*"

coute." It is curious that only three persons off, is Mr. W——h, returned again. He, you know, absconded with a large sum of money which he embezzled. I suppose he is come to make further collections and depredations. Oh! he recollects me I see, and is off like a shot!

" There sits Mr. Justice W—— : he looks as consequential as an owl, and is as loquacious as an auctioneer. I was once, by accident, present at a commission of appeal, in ——— parish, Westminster, when the notorious Mother Winsor made her appearance, and the following dialogue preceded the business of appeal. Justice.—Well, Mrs. Winsor, what brings you here? It is time that both you and I should turn over a new leaf and leave off our juvenile pursuits. Mrs. Winsor.—Lord Mr. W—— ! don't talk such nonsense! Men must have women, and women must have men to the end of the chapter.—

" In

“ In the dress-box there is the Marquess of Broadbottom, of whom so many laughable political anecdotes have been told. A year or two ago he had a gentlemanly quarrel with the corporation of Broadbottom, about appointing a *scavenger* to the market —another difference because some of the Aldermen hesitated to promise him their votes for a person to succeed to a situation, the possessor of which was not dead, but *only dying*. On this subject some curious epistles passed on both sides, with which the world may be edified hereafter. The Marquess levied penalties on others of the same corporation for sporting on his manor, and, on that occasion, *very temperate* epithets mutually passed.—Lastly, notwithstanding all these insults, the obsequious corporation kindly forgot these repeated insults (though not *Quakers*), and returned two friends of the Marquess, as usual, to represent them in parliament; for which service every individual received a present of

two bottles of wine, with a message that they were to return the bottles. Two of the Aldermen mustered up courage to return the wine likewise: but I must not get into election history, or the book will certainly extend to thirty volumes instead of three.

A strange looking female now bowed to ——.

“ Who is that ?” said I. “ A mighty worthy woman,” said he, “ whom I knew when in the North.” “ A Scotch woman, no doubt.” “ Yes,” interrupted the caustic Baronet; “ I knew Lady *****, when in Aberdeenshire. She is a mighty good lady, who has a hard battle betwixt rigid economy and pride, betwixt a love of show, and a love for the little money which has fallen to her share. She dearly loves to give a ball and supper, but then she has no bowels of compassion for her poor domestics, and they would require no bowels to suit her service, since one egg, or one

red

red-herring, is deemed, by her Ladyship, a fair repast for a mop-squeezing drudge, or a liveried slave.

“ Vegetation has great attractions for her, since a little oatmeal and cabbage has been known to feed herself and numerous needy relations for a quarter of a year, at the end of which a splendid entertainment has surprised her friends; but even then, her Ladyship’s looks betrayed a want of wine, and her features assumed a most melancholy cast, when any one appeared inclined to feed hungrily. Mama and my cousins too were often detected in putting by the remnant of hospitality; and it was well known that she fed on the crumbs of her own table for a month afterwards.

“ As a visitor, also, she is most dangerous; she is sure to be taken ill at the end of the stipulated week,

week, and to spin it into three months, if the least encouragement be given." Here we all made head against the male gossip, and quite coughed him down. He retired from the field with a contemptuous smile, and the curtain dropped at the same time. Let us, therefore, if it be but for a moment, drop the curtain on our friend's failings.

CHAPTER V.

AN after-piece is seldom worth looking at. We paid the least possible attention to the one before us. The Baronet changed his box; the Colonel went out to flutter in the neighbouring boxes; my brother turned grave; —— never volunteered conversation except in the way of preaching or advising; but the din in the next box continued unabated.—From being more tranquil, I heard more, and thus the party begun:—

“ Sophia, the evergreen!” cried a battered beau. “ How *long* (laying immense stress on the word *long*) I have remembered her as a *beauty*! The best natured creature in the world too,—*liberal* (looking sarcastically) to a fault! The last time I met her,

she

she was calling in the Bench, on a certain *butler*, an *humble servant* of her's." By the *tone* with which this was said, there must have been something more in it, than I am aware of. I therefore leave it to my reader.

" 'Tis kind," resumed the speaker, " to call on a friend in distress ; and, doubtless, there was some reciprocity of services, some grateful feeling to warrant these attentions. The Hibernian in question looks wondrous fierce when armed cap-à-pie. It is said that he is a warrior of her creation, and that he passed from his militia honors to his present commission, under her auspices. He has made a Queen of his wife, as Pat calls it, by having the kingdom to himself ; on which subject he tells the most romantic tales of a take-in match and a vicious mother-in-law, of a *present* which was made to him, and for which he

was

was afterwards arrested ; but there he comes. What attention—what regard is discernible !”

“ Ha !” said a proud elderly thing of quality, “ Voila ! Monsieur S——, a *has-been* in the beau line, and a would-be man of fashion. He is one of four brothers, whose consequence sprung from the vending of filthy hides, whence they acquired the names of Buck-skin, Doe-skin, Lamb-skin, and Ewe-skin. This unit of the worthy quartette has done all he could to get into notoriety, by getting into the army, or rather the militia, by frequenting public places, by singular affectation, immense presumption, and by newspaper celebrity.

“ This man of leather, married a German woman ; but, by way of being à la mode, he has separated from her, to attach himself to a Lady de

K——,

K—, whose half-century politeness and rubicond countenance, announce to be a *bonne vivante*. A young lamb-skin has been the fruit of this respectable union, at which mine Vrow is furious; and it is not at all impossible but she pay her husband in his *own* coin, by *leathering* him, if she catch the couple together. She has already blackened her rival's character pretty well, by denouncing her as a drunkard, a dealer in untruths, a ci-devant spider-brusher, and one, whose kindness has been manifested to all, from the pantry to the hall, to tradesman, and I don't know what all, until her late husband, a silly young man of rank, was gulled by her."

" How proudly this same S— is bowing to Lady W—! He thinks himself the very cream of fashion; 'tis London cream however, and mixed up with all sorts of trash. His brothers made themselves noted, the one by a high phæton and four, and a su-

per-

perannuated French theatrical character ; the other by protecting Lady F——, such is her present name, and by being in the bays."

" That vulgar woman near Mr. S. is Lady R——n, with her over-dressed daughters. The term over-dressed does not mean over-clad, but applies to their being ultra in the caricature of fashion. Their petticoats are cut in compliment, one would suppose, to old Caledonia, more like kilts than any thing else; so much so that their bashful and awkward footman is literally ashamed of following his mistresses, lest he should be mistaken for a driver of *calves* to market. Their tuckers seem running after their lower drapery ; and the whole display of their persons is disgusting.

" When out of the streets, you generally see these dashing belles reclining in studied and very free

free attitudes on a sopha, facing the window, or leaning and lounging over it, in a most suspicious manner. One of them, having sent for a tradesman one day to give him an order, received him in a recumbent posture, and altogether so astounded the honest shop-keeper that he knew not how to look, how to speak, or how to act. When released from his uncertainty, he asserted, that he really thought that he had gone to the *wrong* house.

“Lady R—— is, however, very proud of her full blown roses of daughters; and, by the most rigid economy, contrives to dress them to the utmost extent of every new fashion. As a drill, her Ladyship might match a serjeant-major of the Guards. No person’s serving-men are better disciplined, yet they make one complaint, and it is a serious one, being a *stomach* complaint, namely, that the flounces and falbelas, the ruffs

and

and lace-trimmings, are clipped from their allowance of provisions, exhibiting redundancies sadly contrasted with their want of plenty.

" She is not, however, the only one whose evening parties arise from the perpetual *Lent* of her kitchen, whose outside finery costs the intestines of the family dearly, who pays her Opera-box from the savings of candle-ends, or who sports her wax-lights from the retrenchment in coals, the watering of small-beer, or the sparing regimen of her patient attendants; not to mention self-denials and the dismissal of poor relations, some of whom must go to a work-house, that Lady So-and-So may go to Court, and may appear, in character, at all places of fashionable resort.

" Is not that the Honorable R—— C——?" said I to —, ceasing for a moment to listen to my communicative neighbours. " It is," replied he,
" if

“ if a man, who is at the head of a house, kept for the purposes of *society and play*, can so be called ; or, in other words, if a peer’s son condescending to be an associate in the firm of a plundering-shop can expect to hold his honorable and elevated rank in the community. If a Lord’s son were to become partner with Mr. Loveday the Poulterer, and, publicly to pluck pigeons at his door, he would be disgraced ; or, if a man of fashion were to turn a carcase-butcher, and to fleece his mutton, in public market, he would be held in abhorrence ; yet do our fashionables unblushingly, and with impunity, feed upon their fellow men, fleece them, in the dead hour of night, and often become literally carcase-butchers, by selling them to a Greek *dealer*, or by his delivering them into the hands of the bailiff, for a play-debt, and often for money, not only illegally but unjustly won, where often the slip of a card or the cogging of a die, may bring ruin in one night.

“ I do not accuse the Honorable of foul play ; but every connection with a hell is derogatory to the character of a gentleman : every emolument reaped from it is pocketing his degradation, and is unworthy of a man. The Honorable C—— was in print, not long ago, in a transaction where a Mr. T—— lost a large sum of money, at a house in Pall Mall, of which Mr. C—— blushes not to be called the manager. This is a house kept for the purposes of *society and play*. Pretty society indeed ! Greeks and Pigeons ! fools and knaves ! How interesting the conversation of such a *rational* and *enlightened* circle must be !

“ But the fact is, for I once lost my money there, the bright circle is a gaming-table ; the *society* is as above described ; the conversation is, “ Red or black wins,” or, “ I’ll set you, Sir, so much money, and the like.” The end of frequenting such society and such

innoc-

innocent play, is shame, ruin, or the loss of all honour and sentiment ; in fact it is to be an idiotical prodigal and unpitied dupe, or as a dark, designing plunderer, and a despised member of society.

“ The brother of the gentleman is a gay fellow, who would do well to remember a paper-transaction with an innkeeper on a certain fashionable road—Oh ! fie, Oh ! fie. But these houses are so fully designated in those excellent guides to fashion, “ The Greeks” and “ Pigeons,” that you had better refer to those little books for further information.”

Lady Elizabeth T—— now drew off my attention from these moral remarks. This antiquated unmarried lady is a complete character. With a very fine fortune, she is so complete a miser, that she lives in the most shabby and scheming manner. The poor ruined Lady T——, her neighbour, in the country,

can give a long account of her Ladyship's hospitality, or rather of her pinching her own establishment and living on her neighbour, during her residence in the country; but her wretched parsimony affords not a return when in town.

“ Upon one occasion *only*, she hired a bed from a broker for Lady T——, who paid dear, in her person, for this friendly visit; not being over-sated with victuals herself, but being devoured alive by the lively companions of a verminous bed—the experiment was probably tried—*Pour décourager les autres!*

“ One of her saving plans is an annual visit of many months to Wales. But the diet of her servants, namely, the coarsest meat and a pound of black bread per diem, is her grand economical resource.

“ In her appearance, she is as shabby as in her table

table and household habits ; so that, when she enters, stuttering and hesitating, a strange shop, the tradesmen and shopmen are unwilling to send home what she orders, until her name be known, and they keep a sharp look-out upon their property.

“ The better to watch her servants, she often slips down stairs so softly, that the cook thinks that she has a ghost at her elbow, when her tall mistress is standing, bolt upright, by her ; and it often happens, that her Ladyship appears at the moment that a malediction is pronouncing against her and her excessive p^{ro}u^{er}y.

“ In former times, however, this ancient dame and her sister, Lady C——, were much talked of, as belles of their day at Paris ; nor have they escaped from on dits of gallantry. This, however, was before

the revolution; and time has revolutionized her Ladyship's attractions since, although the full eye and light hair announce the ruins of former beauty; and her figure must once have been light, elegant, and elastic."

We now perceived Colonel H. A. "It would seem," said Dean —, "a fox-hunting, fashionable Parson, as if the sins of the father were visited on the children, in the present instance. The late Colonel, father to the present one, was a most extensive gallant, and might have had criminal actions enough against him. Poor man, he perished in a duel! His son, who has lived extremely happily with his wife, and was the most indulgent husband in the world, comes now, ungraciously, into public, as the plaintiff in a cause of crim. con. against an Engineer Captain, who has *sapped* his domestic happiness, undermined his

com-

comfort, circumvented and circumvallated his nuptial board, his frail lady, having, after a short siege, surrendered at discretion.

“ These professors of fortification, in all its bearings, are most dangerous men, with their bastions and their batteries, their trenches and their covered ways, their gabions, their gorges and their counter-scarps ; so that plain military manœuvring now has no chance with them. The lady, however, in this case, has not shown the most disinterested affection in the world, having a decided taste for jewels ; four thousand pounds worth of which are actually in the plaintiff’s hands. In this cause, some very illustrious witnesses are to be called, who, however, ought to be a little indulgent, for they are all recorded in the annals of gallantry, and as sporting characters.

The plaintiff is related to the M—— of ——,

Lord — — —. Another relative is to be called, who stands in crim. con. notoriety in former days; and the sporting name of M——l, the King of the kennel, is introduced as an evidence. The great Duke stood sponsor to the plaintiff's child too. Mercy, what a host of great and of gallant people!"

"There's metal more attractive!" cried our guard-Exquisite, in the language of Hamlet, as he re-entered our box after his fluttering circle of visits, and, at the same time, pointing out Mrs. Colonel W——. "How beautiful she looks by candle-light, in spite of the Italian proverb, " *Ni donna ni tela.*" She is yet a *buona roba*, and of an age to suit our highest and most *princely* connoisseurs, being between forty and fifty, and nearest to the latter age. Not a thousand miles from George Street, Portman Square, she may be seen, when highly dressed, sporting her fine figure at her balcony. She has travelled a great deal

deal with the Colonel, and has been much admired abroad as well as at home.

"The Colonel is now absent from home; but a friend of his, a brother field-officer, keeps the ground for him. We must not," continued our friend, "mention names; but the gentleman in question, a great friend of the Colonel, pays due attention to his lady in his absence. Some women marry for a *cloak*, and others for a *spencer*, (and the beautiful Widow C. retains a *silk* veil;) this may be Mrs. W——'s case, as she seldom goes out without one. She is, neanmoins, a most agreeable, pleasing woman. A boy, of about fourteen, often accompanies her, and calls her aunt; some think that a nearer relationship exists between them; but it is quite fashionable for ladies, of the very highest rank, to have relations unaccounted for, and adopted children."

“ Cardinals are scandalously said to have many nephews. Unmarried gentlemen, and wives without issue by their husbands, are very apt to have these articles also ; and, it so happens, that, invariably, the nephew or niece never remembers their papa or mama. The children of adoption, likewise, know nothing of their parentage. The late Lord A—— had an adopted child, a very amiable girl, whose history was very vague. The noble house of R—— has married off a *brother officer's daughter, left as a legacy.* Lord N——'s daughter is still unaccounted for, as well as many others. It is therefore the less to be wondered at, that so fashionable and so gay a woman as Mrs. W——, should favor the prevailing custom. 'Twill be well if the two gentlemen remain friends long ; and Madame should remember that, “ All's well that ends well.”

The transient visitors of theatres now poured in,

in, being the two extremes of society, namely, the fashionable rake, just escaped from his late dinner and under promise to some *unhappy she*, on whom he had designs of some kind, matrimonial or otherwise, and the counter-coxcomb, wishing to blend gentility with the drudgery of his trade, and who puts on master's cloak, and, prematurely, shuts master's shutters, in order to allow himself a peep at high life. If the master be not a very sharp hand, the odds are, that the last few chance customers' accounts go *not* into the till, but are subscribers to Mr. Wiggins, or Mr. Figgins, or Mr. Buggen, or Mr. Skegg's assumption of gentility in seeing a half price theatrical representation, and in meeting his frail Cyprian acquaintances, for whom, a veil, a shawl, or a few pairs of gloves, may, hereafter, disappear, or who may be well treated in an alteration of his master's measure, if they can any how deal ready money, at some of the houses; for it is not the hotels of the nobility alone, which

announce

announce a Harcourt House, a Burlington House or a Devonshire House. We have our Linen Drapers, our retail Haberdashers and our Quacks, in Oxford Houses, Cavendish Houses, Woodstock Houses, Cumberland Houses, and Waterloo Houses.

Let us now, however, get clear of the clerk and the shopman, of the foreman and the gaudy apprentice, always having George Barnwell hung up, in terrorem, and only look to the intemperate and lazy Exquisites and Ruffians, who come to see the *play out*.

So many rushed in at this moment, that it was a complete *countless* host, and so mingled, that the Court and the counter, the senate and the fancy, the Inns of Court, and the inns and outs of government, all pressed in together. *Vive l'Angleterre!* for such a mixture. I saw, at one coup d'œil, Lord

E—gr—t and Mr. Belcher, Lord D—y, the diabolical in appearance, and an hotel-keeper, Mr. Castles and Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Croker and West Country Dick, my shoemaker and the Bishop of —, my habit-maker and Mr. Burgess, the Prince's cook and the Marchioness of Hertford, a lottery-office keeper and a minister, Lord Palmerstone and the Mayor of Garret, Alderman Wood and a door-keeper, a newspaper-man and the Marquess of Headfort, Mrs. Clarke and an informer, two old Generals and an accoucheur, one of the Princes and the Emperor of all the Conjurors, Mr. Gingel and Lord Eardley, a Jew doctor, and Jew King, a celebrated methodist preacher and Mrs. Leigh, Mr. Canning, and Mr. Polito.

The company is so numerous, that my hand aches whilst I take down their characters and their peculiarities. My brain gets puzzled to recollect them

all. I must pause to avoid confusion; and, whilst I think, my reader may rub his or her bright eyes, and think of turning over a *new leaf*, either in the way of *moderate reform*, or of a moderate morning's reading.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT a contrast in a number of the countenances the intelligent face of Lord E——, and the fungosity, the bulbous-root-face of Lord D——. A most provoking caricature was once published, entitled, “Mud Island.” Twas a face, without a feature, or rather features without any expression. This was meant for a most illustrious personage; but mud island becomes comely when contrasted with Lord D——’s repugnant nondescript cranium. How could he ever propose marriage to any woman! especially to a beauty, and who could bear to be the vis-à-vis of such deformity of countenance! Poor Lady D——! her frailties were certainly less culpable, with such a prospect before her; whilst the Lady Townley of the drama is scarcely

licensed in such matrimonial prostitution. Where is the delicacy of some women ?

Lord E—— is a patriarch, as to the number of his family and his female followers, but not *quite so* in the purity of his morals.

“Place aux Dames!” cried a French servant, opening a side box. I expected to see some new foreign Princess come in, to provide for the impossibility of a failure of the line of Hanover, or at least to behold some Eccellenza of an Ambassador’s lady ; but I was deceived. A plain woman came in, highly dressed, with a shade of a companion ; and I was informed, upon enquiry, that she was a member of the higher class of Paphians, a Madame la Comtessa de B——, who boasts of the two most fighting characters in our nation—a celebrated man, who has been lucky enough to preserve all his limbs in the war, and

an intrepid —, who left a limb in Brabant, to testify his personal risks and sacrifices for his country. What can these two heroes find, in this *brown.paper* face and foreign frippery ? but men are capricious in their taste. Else who would prefer brown Lady C—W— to the soft Lady P—, now covered by a ducal mantle ? or look for the roses of October, where they could gather those of June ! In a word, who would prefer fifty to fifteen ? unless it were for the sake of experience, weight, solidity, and the preclusion of any chance of meeting with a rival in her affections. This again is an error ; for the lady's taste is quite the reverse of the gentleman's in this respect.

W— C—n next appeared, a most superlative Exquisite. A great deal of laughing went round amongst the men, and, on his entering our box, my brother quizzed him most amazingly, telling him that a lady had been enquiring after him, who charged

him with a heinous crime, for which she said he deserved to be sent to Coventry ; he at the same time, advised him, when next he changed his name, *without an estate*, not to give one so easily detected, as he did in a love rencontre. He did not much like the roasting, and shuffled off shortly after it.

At this time it was all Arabic to me ; but I was afterwards informed that this is a gentleman of *extensive* but not *expensive* gallantry, and that he finds it very difficult to make love and economy go hand in hand. The subject on which they roasted him, was his passing himself off, to a certain frail fair one, for one of the C——— family. The lady having cause to complain of him, went to C——— House, to make her remonstrance, and inspected and reviewed all the males of the family, before she would be satisfied. On describing his person, his name was discovered ; and an unpleasant eclaircissement took

took place. Some severe verses were inserted, in a periodical work, on this subject; and the gentleman in question has been a marked man, by a certain description of ladies since. He is considered as a poor Knigh Errant in love affairs, and has received the *nom de guerre* of Le Chevalier d'Argentcourt. Gold, I should suppose, must be indispensably necessary to purchase secrecy.

"Who can that mean, undertaker-looking, gloomy, double-faced, suspicious, smiling man be," said I, "who is in the Scotch Peer's box opposite?" "That," replied an officer in the Third Guards, "is a countryman of mine, who, for what purpose I know not, has been dubbed a Baronet. I believe he is an honest man, as Scotch town-councilmen go. He was once Lord Provost of Edinburgh, and is a distiller, or some such thing, by trade. In the time of the scarcity of corn, it is supposed that he did not *lose* by dealing

ing in the article, and he made a great deal of money in the spirit line; so that he was acting in the double capacity of keeping down the people, by the price of bread, and of inflaming their minds and stomachs with the ardent vitriolic fluid expressed from potatoes, turnips and cabbages, under the name of whisky. To extend his ready-money trade the further, he condescended to keep a parcel of retail shops, for poisoning the imagination, and burning up the viscera of the lower orders of the people, the very dregs of society, who demanded, at these drug-shops, for two-penny-worth of *Sir William*."

" 'Tis degrading to see our titled gin-shop men and M. P's candle-makers and soap-boilers, our Jew peers and our malty ladies of quality," continued he. " No wonder indeed at the bad spirit of the people, at the want of lights in our senate-house, at the greeking of our nobility, or at the cross grain of our mush-

.....

mushroom ladies of counterfeit quality, when such May-day sweeps, such Bart'lemy fair gentry, such tinsel and tawdry characters are thrust into high life."

"Upon my soul," cried an old peer, "one does not know with whom we sit down, now o' days, whether titled or not; so that one dares not speak of a trade, be it ever so low, without fear of offending the party."

"'Tis as unsafe," said the guardsman, "as it is to talk of a halter or the pillory, in company with a touchy American, whose rage and hatred against England, accrues from his lineal descent from some pardoned felon or escaped convict, and who thinks that the word halter or handcuff must apply to himself, and is named to affront the Newgate-begotten patriot. In another generation or two, we may look for Botany Bay nobles, and for hulk-senators, if we go on this way." "You are too severe," said my mother; "not but that decent tradesmen would be better in

their

their warehouses, than in either house of parliament, in my humble opinion."

At that moment, the popular Baronet ——— made his appearance. "He is a very good looking man," said I. "I hate him," said my brother, "for his principles, and for the perversion of intellect." "I hate no man," exclaimed a clergyman in our box, "and, although his politics and mine are at variance, I like him for private, individual acts of benevolence, on his part, such as he never boasted of in public, and such as mere accident brought to my knowledge. Benevolence is of all countries, of all politics, and of all religions; and, be the nation, opinion, and creed what they may, I love the act of humanity, and I honor him who performs it. Therefore, and for that reason only, I esteem him.

But

“ But I must quote to you two facts. A boy of about thirteen years old, purloined a sixpenny penknife, from his hard master ; for this he was sent to Cold Bath Fields, and kept on bread and water, in solitary confinement, although the knife was restored. The mother of the boy applied to Sir F—— ——, who investigated the matter. After giving two guineas to the mother, he procured the liberation of the boy, clad him, and sent him, at his own expense, to sea, where he has become a most exemplary character, and is doing uncommonly well. The poor woman, who is a poultreer, has thriven ever since ; and thus has a youth been saved, and a family rescued from disgrace and from infamy. The second instance was in the case of a boy, who lost his life in a mob when Sir F—— —— was drawn by the populace. The Baronet immediately found out the family of the boy, and has provided for every individual of it ever since.

since. These are examples, not only worthy of admiration but of imitation, by all parties."

Here great difference of sentiment was manifested, in our party; and some were of opinion that the humane Baronet was guilty of every life which was lost in the mobs and riots raised by his being transported to the Tower, and by the popular meetings occasioned by himself and party. All, however, agreed that he was grown very moderate of late. I know nothing of politics; but the two examples quoted, would obtain my vote in a canvas, for private esteem, at *least*.

"Another ruler! by the powers!" exclaimed a Captain in the Third Guards; "but not a ruler of the land, like the noble Baronet, but merely a ruler of the Bench. 'Tis Mr. H——, with a day-rule, doubtless,

doubtless, in his pocket. He is a conveyancer; but the other limbs of the law, or of the Devil, have conveyed him to St. George's Fields. This is an Adonis too, a favorite of the frail and fair! a man of self-admiration and of intrigue."

Upon my life these Benchers give themselves amazing airs; there is a pretty set of them now, near the Obelisk. I saw a letter directed to a buck, the other day, addressed *Melina** Place, near the *obstacle*, to—so and so,—K. B. C.—King's Bench Commander, or companion. I am told that there is pretty work going on there, in which the ladies amply play their part. They have their AT HOMES, you may be sure (a laugh), and their waltzing parties, their *lets off*; but not *lets out*, their banquets, their intrigues, and their Greeking; so that they quite rival the quality—

* There is some Greek-joke in this, too deep for me.

end of the town. We may soon expect fashionable *on dits*, from the vicinity of the Borough ; crimi. con. trials arising out of the confined situation of Lambeth-road. It is to be hoped, however, that these *throw-overs* which extend to the fair sex, will be subject to the white-washing system, otherwise a man may get out of debt without getting out of prison in the Bench. Oh ! trumpery, oh ! *Moses*, as a man once said to John King, of money-lending notoriety !

“ Who’s she ?” enquired my brother, of the Colonel. “ What, don’t you know her ?” answered the latter, “ that is the tenderest hearted woman in the three kingdoms. Behold her in her widow’s weeds ! how gracefully she looks ! But she is no veuve de Malabar ; she will not sacrifice herself for the love of any former husband. This is her second widow-hood ; ‘tis Lady F——, better known by the name of “ late D——,” one who never *denied* a lover in her life, whose

whose soft assenting voice was the delight of so many amorous swains. Happy the mortal who makes the third husband to such a dame ! But, upon my honor, she wears very well." "Wears," interrupted —, "a pretty term to be applied to a female: why you talk of a lady as you would of a piece of broad-cloth, or a pair of old boots ! fie, for shame !"

Antri-attrition popped in his head, with "I beg your pardon." "So he may," said Captain — ; "he is not for the first time in the wrong box ; his un-guentous compound has not hindered a spoke from being put into his wheel, nor has it proved to be a matter, which will run on for ever. The sharers in this celebrated undertaking have found themselves a little mistaken. One poor devil was ruined by it ; he bought a number of hundred pound shares, and sold them at half loss. The proprietor was *good* enough to get this accommodation for him ! He tried to de-

stroy himself in France, by throwing himself from certain ramparts, but the head was proof against the shock, coming in contact with kindred stone ; but his leg, being more brittle, broke, and he has now the mortification of being accounted as one of the *Legs*, when he is the veriest Pigeon upon earth. He may, however, thank the good company which he keeps for that report.

“ But to return to anti-attrition. He had a lot of plain daughters with him abroad, to each of whom he promised to give ten thousand boxes of ointment in marriage ; so that the happy husband might have Hymen’s chariot wheels well greased for life. It is astonishing how many, and what characters are in this patent concern,—Lord B——, Admiral H——, a certain Sir John Done-up, a Reverend Clergyman, &c., and even the very clerks of the concern were only to be salaried according to their purchase of shares.

The

'The wheel of fortune turns curiously, in this life, without anti-attrition. A razor-strop, a compound blacking, a quack medicine, or a handsome wife, may make a man's fortune in a short time ; whilst the most rational speculations fail, daily, and involve affluent men in complete ruin.' "As to the blacking-man making a fortune," said I, " 'tis all fair ; he can make a shining character of his customer, in a minute ; but the quack medicine concern appears not quite so bright, nor half so innocent."

Mr. F——, the dragoon, now appeared. A snuff-shop made his father's fortune. High dried has bought him his commission. And here is a dunning tailor, metamorphosed into a hussar ! "Aye, and into a *buck*, too," cried the Colonel, " thanks to his dashing lady, who was, like an ill-made coat, returned once, not much damaged, upon his hands. Her *old* habit, however, induced her to *fall off* from her conjugal

duty again, and she expected a second return ; but Mr. Fitztailor is not such a goose a second time. See how his brow is *overcast* ! how *unseamly* he looks ! Why did he not *cut* sooner ? Poor *Snipson* ! thou art a flat indeed. What a fit subject for *Measure for Measure*, this done-over tailor is."

He looked much enraged and left the box ; it was thought that he overheard our party ; but they heard no more of him ; and, on second thoughts, we heard the orchestra playing "Four-and-twenty fiddler's all on a row." This must have been moving to the gentleman ; it could not *suit* his delicate ears ; nor was it *fit* for him to listen to." (Loud cheering on all hands.) At last, the plebs in the pit hissed us ; and we were as mute as mackerel for exactly seven minutes and a half.

Talking of Legs, (which we did a few minutes ago,)

ago,) there is one of the best made Legs in Europe ; that's T——, the Baronet's son ; he is one of the best made young men in town ; and, for a *leg*, he beats almost any which I ever saw. See how nimbly he leaped over that bench." "What bench?" "Why the bench in the King's box." "Or the box in the King's Bench, if you please," said my brother. "Pshaw, 'twas the Fleet," cried the Clergyman. "Yes, *fleet enough* ; for he distanced all his creditors, and got *over* his debts just as he would leap over a double ditch, or a *fence* in Leicestershire or Lincolnshire." "I wish I could *fence* like him," said our Third Guardsman ; "I can scarcely *parry* a demand of a few hundreds ; and here's a fellow who can stick it into the tradesmen for as many thousands, and then throw them over as easy as he threw his limb over the seat just now."

"He is a devlish clever fellow," cried Sir —

—. “ I’ll lay a bet that he takes ten shots at partridges, and that he does not miss one.” “ I’ll hold you a hundred that he takes ten shots at pigeons, and *bags* every one of them,” said the Colonel; “ then he’s a good whip, and a bold horseman.” “ He has a very plain face,” said I. “ True,” replied the last speaker, “ but plenty of front. It is no easy matter to put him out of countenance.” “ So much the better,” said my mother, “ for I would not have his countenance for all the world.” “ Nevertheless,” resumed the speaker, “ he is a great favorite of the ladies, and of the fancy, and of every body but the vulgar tradesmen and iniquitous money-lenders.

“ How pale he looks!” “ The effect of whitewashing,” replied the Guardsman. “ He is a very brave fellow, however,” said my brother. “ I mean a bottomed, intrepid fellow.” “ My dear Sir,” answered the Clergyman, of whom more will be said hereafter,

“ the

“ the bravest men are always the best ; the word bravery is much mistaken ; say a fighting man, if you please, or a desperate man.” “ Well preached,” said I to ——, “ but do shorten the sermon. Mr. T. seems a fine young man ; as to his character, that is neither here nor there ; if he have left it, like other young gentlemen, in the Fleet, or in the King’s Bench, he may get a new one without regret ; I’ll lay any money that he makes a great match.” “ At what game ?” interrupted the last speaker. “ At matrimony,” replied I : “ in which case he will make game of his enemies, and of his creditors at the same time.” My homily seemed to please better than that of the parson, and was universally applauded. Too much morality is like too much sugar ; it does not suit every palate.

In a groupe of young men, mostly of the tenth Hussars, we discerned young M——. “ There again,”

said my brother, who had, somehow or other, got peevish; “there’s your successful dealer’s consequence! This M—— family has made its fortune by contracts. The uncle, an unfeeling, hard fellow to the poor, has jumped into a curricle, with two outriders from the Smithfield shambles; and, forsooth, he has adopted the Bedford livery, a white coat, with beef steak cape and cuffs. Drovers of swine, and other cattle, slain and sold to government, have made a rich man of this proud one, and keep up his country house. The thing which you see opposite, glories in his own insipidity and extravagance, and must needs be a militaire. He often says, amongst his weak companions, that when he is ruined, he will turn whipper-in to a pack of hounds.

“One would wonder how such cattle could get to the Pavillion at Brighton; but there he and Dandy B—— of no origin, were leading characters, in turn; and

and a certain illustrious and benevolent Duke, not the richest we know, will have cause to remember his being there. One night's work annoyed the poor Duke not a little; it did, not tend to render Mr. —— popular, but it injured the illustrious brother and visitor pretty deeply. These are the advantages, or rather the disadvantages of a nation boutiquière. Money is the national idol; a successful mountebank or an opulent butcher may hope to see his son in princely company. They certainly manage these matters better abroad," concluded my brother.

Lord R—— made his fashionable momentary visit to our box. When he was gone, the sarcastic Baronet said, "that Lord was once the aide-de-camp to the Marquis of H——. 'Tis all we know of him; but all his family has not been so little celebrated. The publicity of the amours of his mother" — Here the Reverend stopped him, saying, "Pardon me Sir,

Lord

Lord R—— is a friend of mine; but were he not, I should just request a cessation of hostilities towards him, as I now do. It seems quite the plan of these times, if a man have a fair character himself, to mount up to his sire and grand-sire, to his mother or grand-dam, in order to find a blot in his escutcheon. Lord R——'s mother is no more; were she worse than she has been, the Italian proverb would teach us charity, had we received *even* an injury from him, much less when her imprudences injured himself alone. “*Morta la bestia, moro il veneno.*” But we keep the venom of scandal alive, and transmit it, from generation to generation.

“ The title of aide-de-camp to the Marquess of —— has even some merit in it; for it argues having a good example before his eyes. Lord H—— is more like what Bayard, *le Chevalier par excellence*, was, than any other man whom we know;—that character

racter of being “sans peur et sans reproche,” is almost peculiar to his Lordship. Early in the field of fight, he covered himself with glory, in a very unequal, a very unpopular, and a very unsuccessful war, as to its *general* issue. On the stage of action, for a very short time at the commencement of a second war, where a want of numbers, a want of able heads, and a want of information, added to a contempt of our foe and a reliance upon foreign concord and co-operation, made our republican, sans culotte foes too much for us, he effected a retreat worthy of Alexander. Noble, generous, and *attached to his Prince*, he has shown a zeal and adherence to that illustrious personage, *à toute épreuve*,—a devotion to his interest, variable under *no* circumstances, and, in his later campaigns, in a far distant hemisphere, his courage and abilities are equally conspicuous. Above interest, he has declined honors which others would have done any thing to obtain; and well known it is,

that

that the Marquessate, nay even a Dukedom, might long since have been his; but he waved it, until added services, and more deserts, might earn and claim the well bestowed distinction. With a contempt for money and for personal advantage, equal to that of the IMMORTAL WILLIAM PITT, he has been, for years, a poor man in the midst of riches, a temperate man in the midst of power and interest, a virtuous man in the midst of excess and pleasure, and near the centre of the highest circle. There are very few characters like his. A blending of him and the Duke of —— would be a happy mixture; his courtesy, his chivalrous notions, his dignified humility, his mildness, grafted on intrepidity; his generosity and consideration for the soldier, would be happy additions to the high military character of the Duke."

Here he would have enlarged, would have
con-

continued, for the theme seemed dear to him. One might easily observe that he spoke from personal regard, as our publisher does of Lord K—n—; but he perceived a very decided inattention around him. The Baronet yawned; Lord —— took snuff; my brother's opera-glass was pointed at a box full of beauties; the Colonel whispered me; and the kind Guardsman looked half attentive, as much as to say, well, we believe all this, but pry'thee shorten thy tale. Enough, my good Sir, enough;—he therefore concluded.

Thus invariably is it with the page of praise. We find it long and tiresome. If a character is eulogized, so few are interested in it, that blank countenances, absent ideas, suspended interest and ennui surround us on every side; but reverse the subject, talk of the corruption of the great, of an unknown intrigue, of the foibles of princes, of a rival's downfall,

fall, or of a beauty's faux pas, and you will have every eye and ear open, eagle-eyed curiosity staring you in the face, tip-toed anxiety standing on either hand, approving smiles and enquiring looks every where about you—that smile which approves the censure, though it may have shared the fault; that enquiring attitude which says, “is that the case? well, I foresaw it—is there nothing more? no greater aggravating circumstance?”—in short, that curiosity which angles for detraction, hooks in information, and lives upon the lost honor of a fellow-creature.—Shame! shame! oh shame!

CHAPTER VII.

Our last dropper-in was B——, the popular Baronet's son. He stayed a few minutes in the box, talked about nothing, and withdrew. He is a half-mixture of Ruffian and of Exquisite, of republican and moderate,—in short he is an unpronounced character. He was *wholly* Ruffian ere the commencement of his attentions to a certain Duke's daughter, which has humanized and aristocratized him a little. Previous to this, he was proud of every thing, which, in my mind, a gentleman ought to be ashamed of, namely, low language and bad habits, *milling*, as these gentry call it, that is, boxing, driving as like a stage coachman as he can, talking and singing slang, drinking malt and purl, smoking, chewing tobacco, and

prac-

practising other butchers', bruisers' and coachmen's tricks.

I now see a French milling Count, who escaped when B. was committed to St. Anne's watch-house for assaulting and tearing an unfortunate female's clothes. This is a new system of chivalry. The Knights, *Knights' sons*, nay Knights *Companions* of old, used to defend and protect the weaker sex; but times are altered; we alter with the times: and the age of chivalry is no more. The hair breadth escapes, the accidents, the peace-breakings, and the pate-breakings of these young blades, beggar all description; and the papers, are, at times, full of the names above mentioned; and, with such feats, as, it is to be hoped, their riper years will blush at. The lady who ventures on the young Hussar, must have courage; but if she have sense enough to take the reins in her own hands, without showing to her husband and to the world that

she has the whip-hand of him, all may yet be well. He will have a fine fortune, and he is good natured, though not less dangerous in these Russian-like frolics, led on by the *good* example of his friends.

On his arm was a certain young Lord, who was seen driving the Baronet's son from the watch-house, when he showed himself too game to run, and when, on paying a fine, he was liberated from the charge of nearly undressing the frail night-walker, who was assaulted, as we have already stated. What a rare history the young French Count will have to give, "when he writes home to his friends!"—of the polish of *Messieurs les Anglais*. It will be an additional feather in John Bull's cap, who is already caricatured and lampooned enough by his neighbours.

The letter B. is a famous one for frolic, *fancy*, and fun; the Peer, the Colonel, and the Captain bearing

bearing that initial. What a pity it is that the papa of the Colonel should so long have delayed getting married, by which a junior has passed him in the *race* of nobility. "Tis a sad thing to be "Duke and no Duke," Lord and no Lord. He is, however, deemed *peerless* amongst the frail fair; and, in his military militia coat, he "he bears his blushing honors thick upon him."

"A propos of *Duke and no Duke*. We shall soon see more on that subject. That is the conclusion of the first letter of the Duke of M——h, to Miss D——s, after he came to his ducal title. But we will not anticipate the pith of these delightful letters. They will be such a treat as the fashionable world has not had, no not even from Mrs. Clarke herself. They are already in the press, and involve such a number of characters, Princes, Peers, Commoners, Lawyers, Jews, Pimps, Ladies, *Doctors*, and even *Apothecaries*;

in

—in short, they will *flutter the Volsci, like an Eagle in a Dove-Cot.*”

With the other Exquisites, who swarmed in the passage and vapoured at the doors of boxes, I was little acquainted. One very modest, pretty looking young man, about twenty-four, saluted my brother. He is the son of the late and brother to the present Lord G——y, and was thought to be tinged with methodism, whilst at Marlow, but now he is quite *degradé*, by associating with the officers, his comrades, in a certain celebrated corps, which has deserved well of its country, and which glories not a little in reining in the pawing war-horse, in shining in the female eye, in

“ —— the plumed troop, and the big wars

“ That make ambition virtue ——

“ —— the neighing steed and the shrill trump,

“ The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,

The

“ The royal banner,—and all quality,

“ Pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious
war.”

He, as well as the conceited St—p—d, the inseparables G——h and H——d, the pale Lord H——b, whom we used to see daily capering with his Arabian steed, the insipid P——y and unfortunate N——t, who was once stabbed, not by his *bosom*-friend, but by a chère amie both frail and fair, were all crowding into the backs of the side-boxes, rattling up and down stairs, and, as the French say, *faisans leur embarras partout*. Many of these were, what they termed, “ a little *fresh* or so,” laughed immoderately at nothing, or looked pillored in capes and cravats, and just deigned to incline their heads to the various persons of their acquaintance, acknowledged by a smile, or brought down by a painted glass applied to eyes not *short* sighted, but to foreheads *short* witted enough. “ That is Capt. G——, of the Guards! What a sweet

little

little sylph-like figure is on his arm. A braver soul does not inherit a body of twice his size. He is a Cambro-Briton, and is a perfect hero, for courage. When the French first began insulting the British officers, he very quietly put two of them, successively, *hors du combat*. After that, he was, in course, free of all further insult from them. They mistook their man, it seems. The young lady, is Miss D—, the Duke of M—'s late protégée, whose publication of his Grace's letters will soon be not the town talk merely, but the universal topic of every Court almost in and out of Europe."

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN the afterpiece was about half over, we grew tired of the scene, and withdrew. Lady —— was engaged in a conversazione ; and we had promised to look in at the gay Mrs. B—r—g's "At Home." We therefore left our box, in the same order as we entered, that is to say, the Colonel giving his arm to me. We had to endure all the staring of these insects, before described, who, not content with looking you out of countenance, have private signals, which they pass to each other, winks, nods, smiles, eyebrows raised up in amazement, and not unfrequently they assume an air of knowing, and of being well with, women who both despise and detest them, or who are wholly ignorant of them—a want of knowledge always advantageous to the not-knowing party. This, however,

does

does not secure them from censure ; and many an innocent girl's good name is talked, winked, and nodded away, by these minor and ungraceful, and graceless Lotharios. B——y wrote on the wall of the staircase, with a pencil, "Ladies' ears bored here."

" *Rather* a fine woman," drawled out one Ruffian, laying such emphasis on the word *rather*, as seemed to denote a favor done, by accounting the unfortunate object of detraction, good-looking at all. " *La, la*," says something more of an Exquisite, who must speak a word or two of French, in order to be intelligible at all. " *She is*," continues the thing, " pretty fair as times go ; a little blazé or so." " *Who's our friend*," exclaimed some boy on town, who scarcely has an *acquaintance*, much less deserves a friend. " *Don't you know her?*" (the emphasis either on the verb to know, or the person *not* known.) " *Oh, that's all you know ! Well, I thought every one*

knew ; but"—Here is quite enough to give one fool the reputation of *knowing*, and one unfortunate, the reputation of being known.

"Lady *tho* and *tho*," *lithps* out an Insipid, tired of himself, of every body, of every thing."

"She *lookths vathly* well, *conthidering* all things."

Now the *conthiderathion*, is the blockhead's invention, a secret, mysterious way of speaking, meaning to imply something where nothing open dares be said—where nothing exists. A fourth *stayed*, and, perhaps, *painted*, male, smiles, looks sly, hems, affects to turn away, and, in a half whisper, addressing some fresh man on town, some green gosling, among elder geese, observes, "My dear Jack, I *do* remember that woman a most lovely creature ; but time—well, *we* can't always be young and handsome (pulls up his cravat) By —, I cannot help thinking of old times —well—never mind—devilish well indeed she looks !

—do

—do you think that she perceived me? Poor Lady —! how many years!"—Well, gentle reader, what is all this? a great deal?—nothing! A great deal of wit meant, and done, on the ground of a lie, in every word and look.

The Colonel, who is a perfect man of the world, knew well how to deal with such gentry, and protected me completely, through their ranks, keeping me in conversation the while, that neither eye nor ear should be offended, and, having a stern and watching look-out upon them, which kept a check upon their impertinence and insignificance. When arrived nearer our carriages, we perceived Mr. T——k, a widower, whose father is still living, and who seems to be losing himself with a bonne amie, of a most ruinous and disreputable class, in whom he places ample confidence, which she *amply* abuses; and Th——, a would-be Exquisite wine-merchant, who is *suffered*

by Dandies, and by titled Russians, because he is *a man of faith*, or a *credit-able* acquaintance, or, to use my brother's school-term, because he gives long tick.

B——y was also one of the door-loungers. He said he had arrived about five minutes ; neither knew what the play or entertainment was ; only came to look for his acquaintance ; seemed to know every woman ; and sported either a mysterious glance, or a condescending smile to every fair one in succession. This hero, I was told by our Guard-Captain, is what he calls “very much in the wind,” that’s to say, “*very much in debt.*” He was one of the hyper-Elegants of Long’s, and left that station under great personal apprehension ; was supposed to be sold by a famous courtezan, through whom he was arrested ; but previous to this, made a most curious exhibition in the neighbourhood of Manchester-square. There he is-

sued

sued from a window, with the myrmidons of the law at his heels, and descended into a high story of a neighbouring dame, safe and unhurt.

He is not the first who has *raised a story* from a roof top. I remember, in my childhood, a bold dragoon, clad in scarlet and gold, being thus *cockloftical* and running along the leads a considerable way, ere he frightened Lord ——'s cook into *hixtericks*, as she called it, to see a blade, armed cap-à-pie descend in her sky-parlour. It was his first and last *attic* flight however; and he was very soon after forced to go abroad, where he became a *detenu* for eight years, and then threw his creditors over.

Lord V—— was likewise of the door party, acknowledging, as they passed, all the frail ones present. Some men hide their vices; others seem really proud

of them. His Lordship is very popular in this line. He came off not very nobly, in a Vauxhall fray, where he was *looking* for his acquaintances at one in the morning, and where he was grossly insulted by a Mr. B——d, who neither spared him in, nor out of Court. There were, lastly, Mr. C——s, of Harley-street, rather too frolicsome for fifty-five, and Lord M—— dancing attendance on an old woman, who passes for his *Vice-treasurer*. L——t, who thinks himself the *fac simile* of Buonaparte, was moreover one of the band; T——r, of the four-horse club, with a suspicious looking female on his arm; B——r, just preparing to migrate to France; and poor G——s, with his *Honorable* wife, the gallant partner of a divorced mate, whom the poor simple second husband has taken *literally for better, for worse*, and is proud to address as the Honorable Mrs. G——. He is returned from a *patch* up abroad, which

which *patch*, like most cobbled work, will doubtless break out again.

“ Has your Ladyship any commands for France ?” articulated, in a half-whisper, young B——n, an Irishman, who is too refined for either his native bog or for a vulgar English soil. “ I can’t live in England,” continued he; “ every thing is so bad, so insipid, and so infernally dear. Shall I tell your cousin, Lady Mary, how well you look ? or take any commission for you to the French metropolis ? A pretty stupid piece of business our theatres ! Now, if I was in Paris, I should be just come from dining off the cookery of Robert, or of Verez; should have my seize plats, to taste at dinner ; my half dozen sorts of wine, all iced ; my fruits, with some taste in them, instead of sour grapes and turnips, in the form of peaches ; I should, after having seen the graces of the dance, or the abilites of a

Talma, a Madame George, or a Mars, be going to the finish, at the *Salon des Etrangers*, or to a *souperfin* somewhere or other."

" And, my dear fellow," coolly replied the Colonel, " there is nobody here who will hinder you from going to *Hell*, (the *Salon des Etrangers* is a gaming-house) your own way, either abroad or at home; but do make a little room until I put Lady — — — into her carriage; fare ye well." My brother gave an approving nod to the Colonel: the Clergyman smiled admiration; my mother looked delighted; and this Galloman appeared a little put down. " Half of these fellows," concluded the Colonel, addressing himself to me, " are nobody, at home; but at the *Salon*, where they lose money; at the *Restaurateur's*, where they spend twice as much as a Frenchman; on the road, where a Frenchman *sacre bleus*, and cavils for six sols, but where

John

John Bull lets himself be *Mi Lorded*, and imposed upon tamely, these half-Exquisites are well received, and, as long as cash is flush, they are extolled to the skies. Were it otherwise, they would tell a far different story."

CHAPTER IX.

“ **W**HAT would you say to stopping for a quarter of an hour at each of our engagements ?” said the new married Colonel to me, “ and then going home with us ; and, if there be any thing to eat in the house, having a glass of Madeira and a sandwich, and cutting up those, who are now probably cutting us up, whilst we are leaving the theatre ?” “ I’ll answer for there being something to eat,” said Lady B——, “ although all in a rough style, as we expected no one ; but I am sure we can muster a sandwich, and I rather think that we may get a glass of sillery with it.”

We adjourned, as proposed, and the rough family fare was, every delicacy in season, served in a very superior style, all being like clock-work,—the supper

on

on table ten minutes after our arrival, the wines of the very best quality, servants drilled to a look, things coming unasked for, smiles from the bride, and the Colonel's dry, idle-seeming, hap-hazard satire, a deal of hospitality, with an appearance of giving you nothing, and a splendid display of plate, china, and of substantial good things, without the semblance of giving trouble,—conversation too, so managed, that you never feel a blank, and that the clock struck four when we conceived it to be about two, having sat down to supper before one. Certainly this couple know how to live; and I wish them much happiness, well convinced that they who do not expect too much felicity in wedlock, are most likely to have a fair portion; but romance and delirium, jealousy, and agonizing sensibility, do better with Cupid than with Hymen.

Time, a great enemy to both, was now pacing on,

on, with his hour-glass and scythe, and not a word from Fidelio. I candidly confess that I was easier on the subject than my brother ; but the reports of some vessels lost, fidgetted us all, and I, in my turn, became miserable on the subject. Solemn engagements are solemn things, and very unfit for women. Besides, the last pledge for keeping an engagement is the two contracting parties performing together their allotted obligation. The French say, “ *Les absens ont toujours tort* ;” but the English are more generous than that.

A word on the plighting of faith—It is a bad custom. Abroad, it is no uncommon thing to have illustrious couples, from the heirs to crowns downwards, *fiancés* or betrothed, in order to favor the ambitious views of cabinets, family interest and arrangement, foreign or domestic *relations*, but not the relations of *real* love and friendship ; for every relation

but

but the contracting parties is consulted, and they are made the victims. What a preposterous practice! Can any one suppose that persons, scarcely knowing each other, can grow into lovers in absence? or that even two children, used to each other's society, when they mutually see the world, travel, enter into fashion's circle, visit brilliant courts, &c. will not come back with altered feeling, as well as with change of views.

Ladies making promises to marry their lovers on their return from sea, or from a campaign, run huge risks of disappointment and of misery; and although the heroic Miss W—, who married her lover with *half a face*, after fighting his country's battles, is said to be very happy, I confess that I set my face against all such rash promises. Wedlock on the spot, or each party free until the next merry meeting, is certainly the safest plan. The loss of an eye,

eye, for instance, must alter our prospects,—a nose too, as in Lord E——'s case, is a leading feature against the party; in fine—a hundred things, time, climate, &c.

Had I not plighted my faith to Fidelio, I should not have felt thus uncomfortable; but this romantic affair pestered me excessively. Let me now, however, go back a moment to our supper party; for we had, besides those already alluded to, a foreign nobleman of much intelligence, and the prosing clergyman who stuck close to us. It has often been observed, that the cloth have not only a keen scent for a benefice, but smell out a feast as well as any one. Like Sir John Falstaff, they may say, and very properly too, in the spirit of peace,

“ The latter end of a fray, and the beginning of
a feast,

“ Suit a dull fighter, and a keen guest.”

Our

Our conversation was, by no means, without interest; for, quitting the subject of fashionable scandal, it turned upon dramatic affairs, and upon other rational subjects; and first on London, its beauties, its public buildings, its public institutions, its fashions, its amusements, its elegantes, and its young men à la mode.

Our foreigner rendered justice to the English in every thing but their buildings, and those he called black, dirty, mean brick edifices, occasionally fronted with a little stone, or more commonly with cement, which he deemed a poor substitute for the former article. Our churches, even St. Paul's, he undervalued; our palaces, and other residences of the Royal Family, he laughed at; and our theatres were, by no means, as to the exterior, to his taste, nor worthy, as he said, of so great a nation. The interiors, he admitted, were superb; the lighting with

gas

gas pleased him extremely ; and he allowed that our minor theatres exceeded, in beauty, those of France. It won't do to talk of theatres or other edifices in Italy : there we must yield the palm. Astley's horse performances quite delighted him ; and, in spite of the French affecting to prefer their Franconi, he candidly allowed that every thing which could be done with a horse, was done there ; (at Astley's) and that, in point of splendid decorations and stage-effect, Timour the Tartar, the Secret Mine, the Steel Castle, &c. beat the representations abroad hollow.

He joined me, however, in disapproving of the introduction of horses and dog-performers, monkeys, Indian jugglers, Creek-combatants, or any such unbecoming representations on our chief great national theatres, although certainly Mrs. Harry Johnston on the white horse had powerful attractions, as *Banco* (not Banco's ghost) can well attest, and although

although our females were just as delighted with the red savages, as they were with Platoff and his Cos-sacks, with Louis XVIII. returning home, with Boney in his prison-ship, with the lions at the Tower, and the kings and emperors all in a row.

Still, whilst we condemn this deviation from rule and from dignity, we must not pretend to say that it is confined to England. David was mounted on a tame elephant; and the finest horses of the royal manége were lent, to appear in a grand opera, (I think) of Alessandro in Egitto, at the beautiful theatre at Naples, whilst horse and foot combatants heightened the interest of the scene. Moreover, be it remembered, that these tame animals excite no disgust, and that the fight is bloodless; whilst the Spanish beauties witness, with admiration, the wild, destructive contest with the bull, sit out the sanguinary

nary scene, and applaud the favorite Toridor with masculine exultation.

With our authors and dramatic pieces, the Count was well acquainted. He enjoyed the beauties of Shakespear, and preferred his historical and other dramatic pieces to all our modern ones, which savour terribly of the German school, and which are filled either with stolen subjects of romance, or become mere gawdy puppet-shows, whilst our after-pieces appear to be made purely for the nursery.

He attempted, however, unsuccessfully, to accuse our tragedies of a want of majesty, preferring, injudiciously, the rhyming verse of Corneille and of Racine; but he very justly allowed that Kemble had done wonders for the stage, in point of national correctness, costume, the style of the Greeks and Romans,

mans, attitude, deportment, and majestic dignity. Talma, it is said, taught the Usurper of France how to bend the disdainful brow, to curl the contemptuous lip, to look his man out of his presence, to awe, by his coldness, to impose, by his gravity, to chill, by his frown, to sweep the stately robe and fold the arm with graceful haughtiness, how to bend the thoughtful eye on earth, to light it up in fire when angry, to give the soldier's look, or to smile with scorn or indignation—in a word to play, and that *d'après la nature*, the tyrant and the chief. Kemble's lessons would have been just as useful, just as masterly ; but, heaven be praised ! there is no scholar for such a school here ! A British prince needs no such lessons ; nature and humanity are his best examples ; his greatest dignity is the honor of reigning over a free and enlightened people ; not but, to give the Prince his due, he is as graceful, although not so theatrical, as all we have above mentioned.

The

The plots of our tragedies, he disapproved of, thinking them too deep, too bloody, too sepulchral. He quoted one of our early dramas, before Shakespeare's time, where, in support of what he advanced, he repeated a song, sung by madmen, to a most horrible tune no doubt, who are disgustingly introduced on the stage.—

SONG.

O let us howl some heavy note,
Some deadly dogged howl;
Sounding as from the threatening throat
Of beasts and fatal fowl.

As ravens, scritch-owls, bulls and bears,
We'll bill and bawl our parts,
'Till yerksome noise have cloy'd your ears,
And corasived your hearts.

At

At last, when as our quire wants breath,
Our bodies being blest,
We'll sing like swans to welcome death,
And die in love and rest.

At the close of this choral song, a mad dance ensues. "This," said he, "beats every thing except a German tragedy formed on the British model, which proceeded so rapidly in tears, in deaths, and in dolorous events, that, at the close of the third act, none of the *dramatis personæ* were left living; but, to obviate the necessity of dropping the curtain, thus prematurely, the ghosts and spectres of the whole party performed the other two acts entirely. This," concluded he, "is the most tragic tragedy I ever witnessed, although *Romeo and Juliet* is not amiss, in point of deaths and disasters."

To our females, he paid the highest encomiums,

miums, although I doubt his sincerity, and believe that a wish to stand well with us, went a great way. Our fops, he caricatured not badly, and assured us, that no lisping Parisian beau, unable to articulate the *r*, and making Paris, Payee, is equal to the bodiced and made-up Dandy. He assured us also that, sleeping next room to one of these, at Jaquier's hotel, he counted three hours whilst he was dressing, and left him unfinished. He told us that one hour was employed on the *outside* of the head, combing, brushing, perfuming, unguenting, and twisting about the hair, in divers shapes, until the Dandy *pleased* himself, by a bald forehead, all but one crooked lock on the left temple. He washed his face thrice, with elder-flower water, with rose-water, for the sake of his eyes, then with a creamy stuff or dew for complexion's sake. His cravat took half an hour adjusting, his stays one hour lacing, he tried on a dozen waistcoats, had his pantaloons altered, gave half an hour's

hour's jobation to his washer-woman for not hitting the happy medium in starch, and then, half finished, and quite out of breath with the exertions of the toilette, swallowing a glass of Curaçoa in order to revive his spirits, and to recruit his strength. Who the individual was, I could not learn; but the story is by no means out of nature or overcharged. I implicitly rely on the Count's veracity, and at all events, “*Si none vero, e ben trovato.*” He concluded by making some very happy quotations from our best poets, and gave the deserved meed of praise to Milton, Shakespear, Pope, Dryden, Addison, and the numerous list of British Poets. The parson took the lead in belles lettres, and in court history, in which he was well versed, both abroad and at home. I thought him particularly proper, in his behaviour, and so did my mother, whose complete complaisant and most humble servant, he appeared to be. In short, we

spent

spent an uncommonly happy night, and could count it amongst both the fashionable and rational amusements of our lives—two thing snot always reconcileable. I must now return to domestic affairs, and proceed in my own story.

CHAPTER X.

WHILST at my toilette the next day, I seemed to be in one of those waking dreams which a confused survey of past occurrences creates. When ruminating on the past, we embody thought, and fancy presents to us the magic lanthorn of life. In the French translation of Werther's Leyden, Werther is made to say, "Qu'est ce que c'est que la vie, sans l'amour ? C'est une lanterne magique sans lumiere." For this reason, my sparks, who came into my mind, formed the light of the representation—the very gas of fashion, as some of our silly writers call it. At the same time, I am not clear but these lights, like the ignis fatuus, or the fire-fly, are very apt to mislead, and to end in nothing, or in worse than nothing—disappointment and regret.

Reflection now brought to my view all the couples who had either been crossed in love, or who had been still more crossed in wedlock. How many a partner too, I thought on, who was swept away in the Peninsular, and in the two last short and decisive campaigns. Many an Adonis laid low; many a Narcissus cut off, in the very bloom of youth. This was too grave for me. I then begun to count my present list of beaux, of dancing partners, and of dancing puppies.

Not amongst the latter, but rather amongst the former, poor Harry Wildsh came across my brain. A good soul, but a flighty one for a husband. I had scarcely embraced the thought, when my woman, as if she read the tablets of my mind, informed me that Harry Wildish had actually been in town, and that he had just called on my mother. I avoided seeing him. He sat a long while with her; and during his visitation,

for

for it was like half-a-dozen common visits, he assumed an entirely new character. The wild, rattling, good hearted fellow, was his primitive cast; but, since his connection with *Fidelio*, he began to sentimentalize, and, in his interview with my mother, he absolutely represented what the French call, and what we often meet with in society of both sexes, *un roman ambulant*, (a walking novel). But, between excess and sentiment, there is but one gradation. The disappointed rake grows tender and melancholy; the tripping, stumbling belle becomes gloomy and tearful; excessive warmth often precedes showers, and showers do but bring back excessive warmth. These are subjects teeming with mischief, of which a female pen *may not write*.

I have, long ago, remarked Lady Mildew's character. Bad as she is, she has still the failings, though none of the virtues of humanity. She is envious, aged,

disappointed, severe, resentful, uncharitable, high, haughty, and unfeeling *for others*; yet, touch the string on which her feelings and failings are hung, sound the note to which her wasted and degraded heart, responsively beats in unison, and tears—the emblems, but not the *faithful* ambassadors or enunciators of feeling, follow—they flow, big with disappointment, salt with reminiscent culpability, slow with struggling pride, strong with revengeful, and dubious with divided feeling. How different the tear of sympathy! It lurks proudly in the full bright eye, and scarcely dims the jewel, which stands resplendent in it, trembling, as in doubt, whether to conceal the noble feeling or to overflow: it balances feebly under the eye-lid of beauty; and, when it drops, it shows such warmth, such sunshine of the soul, that it seems a half pleasure, half pain, unknown to all those who have not seen it, and who, seeing it, have not felt it sensibly.

But

But to return to Harry ; he had met with deceit in the world ; he had wandered in the paths of folly ; and he had, on a conviction of the uncertainty of all human events, quite formed himself into a character. But the difficulty was, to make others fancy as he did. He got by heart many sentimental things, walked up and down the room, and fancied himself all which he was not—a young, sage, prematurely grave, wise, reformed, interesting young man, just divorced from vice and extravagance, and wedded to virtue and temperance..

He gave my mother, in the course of conversation, fully to understand that, as he could not marry me, he should live single all his life. (How noble !) He even talked of bequeathing all his property to me ; and assured her that, in spite of all his former wildness, he was the steadiest fellow in the world. “ You’ll see, Lady —,” said he, “ I shall never marry at all.”

Here my mother laughed at him, told him to consider his youth, the propriety of his forming an honorable connection, the many beautiful and deserving women whom he might meet with. "All very true," cried Harry, "but I am a very singular fellow, firm as the oak to my purpose. Once crossed in love, "the heart can bloom no more;" but there are those whom I prize more than myself, and who I should wish to see united." Here he spoke in almost rapturous terms of Fidelio, swearing that there was not such a being upon earth, and adding, that he hoped that I would have him, although he did not know that I had been asked. What a curious plan this of these friends, to be disposing of my heart and hand by proxy! I have no patience with them.

I sat with my brother during Harry Wildish's stay, who was punished to a degree at not receiving letters; but on coming to the window, I saw Fidilio's courier

courier riding smartly up to the door. I therefore ran down hastily to prevent any too great surprize from irritating my brother's nerves, and I received a letter from the servant, which we will open in next chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

IT was to my mother, and was thus worded:—

“ My dear Lady —.

“ I have halted half an hour at Bexley-heath, in order to give my courier time to arrive, so long before *us*, as may prepare my friend to receive the nun, and may save him from being over agitated. Announce a letter from me, and next say, that I expect to arrive as soon as it. Our nun had not completed her noviciate, therefore all is well. And now, my dear Lady —, allow me to give a caution to yourself and to my beloved —— (Well, it’s time, thought I, to mention me, and this is the first tender word about me: *n’importe!* but here go the *cautions* and the *prosing*) respecting the timid female, who is about

about to enter your family. Let her not be received as a stranger, but as a friend; nay, I should say, not as a mere friend, but as a relative. She is like a bruised plant; she requires care and a warm and feeling hand to raise her from her fall; a look, a word, a gesture, a half discovered thought, would overwhelm her. She is like the sensitive plant (stuff, quoth I; he is quite in love with the woman), which shrinks from mortal touch. She has once been betrayed, and she thinks that every eye has seen her shame. No common share of delicacy is required here. The fond eye, the encouraging glance, a meeting more than half way, indulgence in every look and word, for I assure you that her sufferings are of the most acute kind, at approaching the family. Lastly (oh! I am glad that he has come to the end, but, in his preaching, he has an ultimate and a penultimate end), expect not too much from her in person, or in manner. The anguish of a penitent mind impresses

the features with an unalluring cast; a life of retirement and tears banishes the little worldly attractions of society; frailties known, felt, repented and confessed, dash the countenance with a diffidence which repels our sympathies for a moment, but which must increase them all on reflection. You will, I know, excuse this hint (oh! a *hint* he calls it! I know Fidelio's *hints*: they are longer than any other lectures in the world, said I), as the object nearest and dearest to my heart is——("me," interrupted I.) "Not at all," said my mother; "is seeing your whole family happy in all respects."

There were a few lines more; but I heard the rattling of carriage-wheels; and moreover I had read quite enough of the letter. To any one who expects to see a person, on whose character very dear interests depend, I need not attempt to describe the feeling of anxiety which the mind is racked by.—

What

What is he or she like? Is the person handsome, prepossessing? What is the leading feature of their mind? Are they kind-hearted, feeling, intellectual? What is the predominant passion? Do they seem as if they would sympathize with us? Is there any intelligence of hearts? Then again, we form a something, most probably very unlike to the reality; and we are all anxiety to see the creature of our brain. Are we to be agreeably or sadly disappointed? All this is nothing short of agony; but it is short lived. What must be a proxy-married wife's or husband's doubts and dreads on such an occasion?

There were few moments more to wait. The arrival was now positive. 'Twas no longer a tale told, but one about to appear upon the scene. My mother was dispatched to prepare my brother; for Fidelio's long letter, like his long-winded lessons, had consumed all the preparatory time. I therefore flew to

meet

meet my *sister* elect, for I hate the words *in law*, and to detain her a few minutes, ere we introduced her to my brother. The chaise arrives—the gates fly open—the couple descend—enter the hall—and, before I could look round me, I had a sister in my arms. Here I felt keenly; I embraced her most tenderly; and, I think, I can now feel her heart swelling and struggling in my bosom. Be at peace timid flutterer, thought I; thy miseries are now over; thou hast now a home, and a haven, after shipwreck. She was every thing, but what I should have thought her—a soul of fire, a figure of fascination, a spell, a very charm—all the heart of man could wish; but she deserves a chapter to herself, and she shall have it.

CHAPTER XII.

THERE is, in souls, a sympathy with sounds. Nothing truer. Nor ever did I hear a more silvery mellifluous voice ; 'twas a tone of persuasion, hung on affection's tongue—a note of pity, rung by some sainted hand ; 'twas all powerful ; 'twas all woman ! And what is a greater charm than voice ? Fidelio did well, in not describing her ! He showed masterly skill and judgment, and great knowledge of the human heart, in not over-rating the charms of his interesting companion. I should probably have been disappointed, had he done so ; but, as it was, she burst upon me, in point of beauty, like an unexpected ray of light from an impending cloud. Her veil, her habit, her unadvancing air of modest timidity, the gentle impression of pious sorrow, all conspired to render her irresistible.

sistible. It was not admiration, nor pity alone, which she claimed ; but it was love, blending and refining, melting and entwining both.

So wrapt in feeling and delight was I, that I scarcely saw Fidelio, and so eager was he, in watching us both, and in insuring our mutual approval of each other, that he stood like a statue, at which I was a little piqued. But this was no time for selfish, or for minor considerations ; our business was to introduce her to my brother, and to spare her feelings as much as possible. Fidelio very properly suggested the delicacy of his introducing her, and of leaving my brother and her, for some moments, together. This was agreed upon ; but, on her way, she met my mother. With the kindest and best of hearts, age, habit, or family pride, has given my mother a look of severity. The fair penitent beheld it, and threw herself at her feet. Here we had a painful scene of tender-

tenderness, of explanations, of soothing, and of setting to rights.

Fidelio, like an able General, chose this moment to slip into my brother's apartment, to assure him that she had been received with the utmost tenderness, that she had canvassed an interest in every heart, and had gained it, and that she would be in his embrace in a few minutes. Having led her into my brother's room, and joined their hands, he came out suddenly, bathed in tears, and covering his face.

He now, for the first time, had leisure to attend to me, and, it may be supposed, that kind words, kind looks, and demonstrations of happiness, passed betwixt us.

We now came to the family arrangements for a family marriage. It was proposed that a special licence

licence should be obtained for both couples, which was agreed on; and, as our fair stranger was of different faith, they could afterwards be married at one of the Ambassador's chapels.

We were soon summoned to my brother's room, where sunshine had succeeded to showers of love and of repentance; but so overjoyed was my brother, that his fever came on again, and he was delirious all night. Here was the family once more plunged into the deepest despair; and every feeling, unconnected with the two most prominent characters of the eventful scene, seemed benumbed, every interest suspended, every individual sunk into nothing. What a distracting thought, should wounded justice strike my brother, in turn, when at the moment of making atonement for his crime,—should rigid destiny and unrelenting fate, punish the frailty of a female, when within a few hours of being expiated. This would be

like

like the anxious merchant's fate, who, locking up, unwisely, all his treasure in one casket, embarking it perilously in one vessel, saw it menaced by rocks and waves, gave it up for lost, and abandoned himself to despair, then making a solemn vow to raise a temple to gratitude, if it escaped, hailed its arrival, with bended knees and tearful eyes, and witnessed its foundering, as it entered the port.

The next morning it was thought expedient to marry the first couple in hand by a priest, as my brother's reason returned. My sister became my room-companion; and my brother, although perfectly sensible, tranquil, and happy, from the moment that he made atonement for his perfidy, by the performance of the marriage ceremony, was not out of danger for many days. The confusion of our family is difficult to paint; and Fidelio and I, again forgot ourselves, in our anxiety for the sufferings of others.

A se-

A second marriage ceremony was performed ; and my *turn* was postponed until their return from Bristol Hot Wells ; my mother, Fidelio, and myself retiring, as in all cases of troubles, to our Thames-side-cottage.

My brother's wife is an amiable creature, lovely, peaceful, and full of interest. I was convinced, from the first moment that I saw her, that she would make my brother happy ; and the event warranted my predictions. But the chiefest happiness, the purest, and the most unalloyed, was the consolation of having returned to the path of rectitude, and of having made satisfaction to injured beauty.

My brother's health returned rapidly. He wrote to us daily, describing his as no usual state of felicity, and intreated Fidelio and myself to put off our marriage until he was well enough to be present.

He

He might have saved himself the trouble ; for tranquil Fidelio seemed just as happy as if he had been married a dozen times. This sang froid sometimes provoked me ; and I named it to my mother, who began the old story of making an angel of him. She particularly named his conduct respecting my brother's wife, as the rarest instance of the most noble and delicate conduct. I really began to be tired of his visits ; but his incomparable temper always put me in good humour with him. He is like a stream, which majestically and steadily glides through life, shaping a straight and uninterrupted course, unchecked by ambition, surmounting difficulty, above little objects, and never to be turned aside.

An humble request now come from Harry Wildish, to be present at my wedding, and to give me away to his dearest friend. This caused a negotiation

gociation with my brother, who consented; but, as usual, other difficulties always intervened to postpone my marriage, and, in the interim, the tongue of scandal was loud and wide-spreading respecting myself, my brother, the poor nun, and all the family; in so much, that Fidelio was again obliged to call out his man, who *turned out* a coward, by not turning out to meet him.

He also commenced two actions for libel, one of which was an insinuation, well masked, and well told, which hinted that, "the pecuniary difficulties of Lady — — —, and of the whole family, had now led to a very delicate disclosure. Two bonds had found their way into the world, for large sums, the one given to the Right Honorable mother, the other to the gallant Colonel her son; and as non-payment attended both, it was agreed upon that the generous

generous donor should receive the sister in present payment, and that the reduced militaire, should marry his brother-in-law's mistress fetched from a foreign garrison." "Il y a des arrangemens avec le *ciel*," say the French most impiously; but the error is in the name only; the opposite place is meant. Much happiness to the two loving couples!!!

What a stormy passage has mine been through life! But before I proceed further on my history, I must account for the cause of the present delay, and give a detail of my sister, the nouvelle mariee's story, which, of course, the reader is looking for. I shall abridge my own, which is drawing towards a close; but Fidelio's chivalrous undertaking, its particulars and success are worthy narrating. A nun and an elopement, a proxy-lover and an unforeseen marriage

marriage are evident truly worthy of a novel; being facts, however, they passed off less miraculously than one, *otherwise*, might describe them.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN Fidelio arrived near the convent, his first care was to enquire if the fair sufferer were still alive; his second question was, "had she taken the veil?" The former was answered in the affirmative—the latter was replied to in the negative. Travelling so far alone, he had had ample scope for meditation, and had come to a resolution, in case she had not taken the veil, to consult the abbess previous to her removal, as his was an embassy with the view of restoring peace to the bosom, which it had fled, not one to surprize retirement, or to invade that tranquillity which religious resignation can shed over the mind.

In the event of the nun's being happy, his
first

first wish was to make the honorable offer of atonement from my brother ; but to leave her and her superior to settle the point between them. In the event, however, of the fair penitent's wish to accept his offer, he was determined to carry her off with or without the abbess's consent.

With his usual caution and circumspection, and with the judgment of an old and tried soldier, he began his reconnoissance ; and first he enquired as to the character of the superior,—whether she was a person devoted from her earliest years to the monastic life, or whether she had known the world and flown from its deceitful allurements, in the evening of her life, making her convent her resting-place and safe retreat. The latter was the case. This gave him sanguine hope ; and, first assuming the character of a near relation of the novice, he waited upon the superior, with all modesty and humility of exterior, and

pro-

provided, interiorly, with all the rhetoric which he could master.

His interview with the lady abbess, was most satisfactory ; he found her quite a woman of the world, courtly, well bred and benevolent in her manners, yet sufficiently dignified and reserved. Her deep veil, sweeping train, her majestic deportment, yet averted and downcast eye, had something most imposing in them. The loves and graces had once played round her eyes and lips, and basked in her tender glances and in her youthful smiles ; but they were now subdued, by a superior feeling, and gave place to piety, resignation, and to longanimity.

Fidelio, much struck with this venerable lady, unfolded his business with the utmost caution, respect, and decorous delicacy. The superior, candidly told him that the novice was nothing short of broken

hearted, and that she much feared that she was giving to religion, a divided heart. "It too frequently happens that the stillness of despair," said she, "is mistaken for the fortitude and resignation of piety. Such sacrifices are not only detrimental to the cause of religion, but fatal to the blinded victim. She has found, in the cloister, a retreat from a scoffing world, a harbour for a penitent heart, a place of safety to protect her from insult or persecution; but she has found nothing else. I will prepare her for your visit, and I shall be happy to restore her to the world. This restitution on the part of her betrayer, is but an act of mere retributive justice, (here she looked severe); and our allowing his victim to receive his hand, must take a heavy weight of crime off his burthened conscience." Fidelio assured her that he felt it so, and she withdrew, in all the majesty of virtue, in all the tranquillity of one free from the world.

She

She stayed an immense time with the fair novice, proceeding gently and delicately, step by step, in this intricate and unexpected business ; and, after having so gently entered upon her task, as to give perfect ease to her hearer's mind, she heaved a deep, but not painful sigh, embraced her affectionately, and sent her, at one, to the grate, to commune with the faithful ambassador.

At first the nun started, as being unacquainted with Fidelio ; but the production of a ring, a miniature, his letters, and other credentials, obtained him the confidence and credence, which he merited. Love was not destroyed, in her bosom, by the injury which she had endured ; she had but one doubt, namely the opinion of our family, the fear of being looked down upon, and that Fidelio completely removed, by the most full and unqualified assurances

of our consent, and by written testimonies to that effect.

Reassured and made comfortable, on that head, she prepared to take leave of her religious companions, and she shed many a tear, ere she got unlocked from their embraces ; but she informed Fidelio that she suffered most in parting from the abbess, who had been more than a mother to her.

She now left the cloistered wall, and travelled in such haste, both day and night, that she even did not stop to purchase clothes fit for the popular world ; but merely threw an immense silk mantle over her monastic habit, which she became astonishingly, and thus arrived in town.

Of her religious companions, those who had taken

taken the veil blamed her. They knew not the world, and were truly devoted to a cloistered life. The novices wept and sighed over her, and, probably, some of them wished to be in her place.

Of sighs, let me say one word--there are two *distinct* ones, the sigh of suffering, the sigh of recollection. Heart-rending and violent, profound and sepulchral is the former. The latter is gentle, sweet, full of melancholy pleasure, and bringing consolation and relief. We sigh when we look back to days which have passed for ever, when we contemplate consumed youth, past enjoyments, and the prospects which have half died away in our memory, and left but a declining tint upon our view. We sigh in fondness for them, lost like a departed infant; but we scarcely wish to climb the acclivity of youth again, to tread the same paths, fraught with as much pain as pleasure; and, if we drop a tear for departed worth or innocence,

cence, hope tells us, that happiness is its future portion, and we cannot wish to recall it to the world again.

On the journey, my sister told Fidelio the superior's short history; but I shall reverse it for another place.

The young couple lived, for a considerable time, in retirement, despising the variety of scandalous reports of the gay circle. Some considered the marriage, one of conscience; some called it a degrading alliance; some laughed at the romance of it; others affected to disbelieve the leading points of the story; *none* praised the restitution made; and we lost, on this account, a great number of our acquaintances, whose absence, to use the Irishman's phrase, *was good company*.

I must

I must now return to my own history, and give a reason for the delay of my own marriage, not broken off by a clock of the castle striking one ! by the ring being lost, by a priest failing to come, or by a faithless bridegroom altering his mind, and writing a tame, temporising letter, as we so often and edifyingly see, in our papers, the *gentleman-like puts-off* of sated lovers, or the attorney's dictation, where the fortune turns out to have been exaggerated, or an empty shadow, as in the case of Captain M. D., an exiled, but generous prodigal, who when warned of his mistake, on the vigil of his marriage, coolly and affectedly pulled up his boots, and showing his man of business, who got him his wife, as he used to discount him a bill, a bottle of wine, said, “ Doubleface, you see that bottle of wine ; it is called for ; so is my tawny bride. As for your advice, *Il n'en est plus tems.*” The old French proverb is, *Quand le vin est tiré, il faut le boire.* So, swallow-

ing the bitter matrimonial dose, and, affectedly taking a pinch of snuff, he bowed his lawyer to the door, got hazy by himself, and then called for his night-gown and slippers, ordering a monkey of a French valet to awaken him early, and observing, *La Pierre, nous nous marrions demain.* To which *La Pierre*, who was his master's echo, and every thing else *convenient*, answered, *Eh ! bien, mon maitre, marrions nous.*

Neither was my solemn vow interrupted by an unperceived figure advancing to the altar with, “ I forbid the banns ;” but a quiet, probable, and legitimate cause. However, as of late we have got a little too much into the gloomy, as our pages have suffered some degree of obfuscation, to use my brother’s tutor’s favorite expression, my ladies and gentlemen readers will allow me to introduce, once more, Lady Newfangle, a person with whom they are already acquainted, and

and who will appear, on this occasion, for positively the very last time.

I should previously observe of the lawyer, that he had made up the match, but having found out exaggeration on the part of one of the contracting parties, he, morally, offered to misrepresent the gentleman to the lady, and to break off the match, and then to commence *de novo*, on the prospect of a rich Jewess, not a hundred miles from Richmond, or of Sir P. C.—'s daughter, rendered rich by the misinterpretation of a will, or rather by the ignorance of a lawyer's clerk, the draftsman of the will. One can never read these legal errors, without thinking of Beaumarchai's admirable law-quirk of “*Il lui payera une telle somme dans le chateau ou il l'epousera;*” a phrase, liable to be translated two ways—“*He shall pay her such a sum in the castle, or he shall marry her;*” or again,

“ he shall pay her such a sum in the castle *where* he shall marry her.” I need not tell my readers, acquainted with French, that *ou* has *both* these significations.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE young couple was off; but Lady Newfangle came to make her congratulatory visit. She is a good-natured creature, always serves us to laugh at, cannot see her own absurdity, and means well; so we let her in. "My dearest creatures, I embrace you de *toute ma cœur*," cried she, having borne this broken French, in agony, from Portland-place to our abode. "I wish you much joy; saw the match in the paper; but very badly put in; there was not quality style enough about it, but it can't be *hoped*; I come to offer my *de-vours*, and to request that I may be permitted to give a *fête* upon the occasion. I will make the Bank notes fly; we quality must be extravagant; besides, I have ordered such a splendid silver robe, to be looped up with diamonds, and a *tie-arrow*, composed of all the

gems,

gems, the former from the Miss Thing-em-tights, in Golden-square—fusty old maid frumps ! but I employ 'em because they they are allied to nobility—the Marquess of Q—— ! the Admiral, their own brother, married to a young woman ! the other, old ideot that he is, and half crazy besides, a cracked character—not the lady, mind you, I know naught about her; and then these dress-makers have a General and a Baronet in their family, for which reason we quality ought to countenance them,—and so I do ; I owe them several hundred pounds ; but it's *credit*-able, mind the pun, to have quality on their books, and therefore I will remain there as long as they will let me, ha, ha, ha ! A rattle-brain thing, an't I ? but (ringing the bell), tell one of my footmen to bring up the melons and pomegranates, a trifling present for your Ladyship.

“ But to return to my fête : it shall be most splendid ; I have changed my livery on the occasion. (My mother

mother winked at me and smiled.) Grey and red and gold an't dashing enough. Besides, I met a quack with the same. The next shall be like the Royal Dukes', only laced with silver instead of gold, for fear of giving offence. I always uphold the Crown. Well, then ; and I have new furnished four rooms, and will invite all the world—of quality, mind you, that I can collect together. Pray do prevail upon your sister to come in her nun's habit. I never saw a nun's dress in my life ; for there never was a bit of nun's flesh in my family. But then the novelty of the thing ! and we shall have many characters, and fancy-dresses besides."

I told her that I could not expect my sister to comply with this request; and that I feared, very much, that their taste for retirement would prevent the new married couple from coming at all; but that her good intentions should be made known to them.

" Oh,

“ Oh ! make 'em come,” exclaimed she; “ the more the merrier; and I assure you, that I have told all the world that the stranger is allied to all the first families in Spain. I have forged dukedoms and coined titles by the gross for them.” “ Gross enough,” interrupted my mother; “ but, my dear Lady Newfangle, do you think that your coinage will pass current ?” “ Oh ! to be sure; they'll only say that I mistake the name, and I do like a title to my heart.”

My mother, here, took occasion to be serious, assuring her Ladyship, that she should be sorry to pass her daughter-in-law off as an impostress, and concluded by saying, that she was only the offspring of a rich and respectable merchant abroad; but that my brother had long been attached to her, and that, as she was his choice, we were all perfectly satisfied. We meant to conceal the convent story; but, from our tattling servants, it was soon spread all over the

town;

town; and the addition of my brother's illness, with comments quite unfavorable to his lady, were tacked to it, by the voice of scandal.

Lady Newfangle now took her leave, calling her footmen loudly, and mentioning all the Lords and Ladies to whom she was about to make her morning visits.

An anonymous letter soon appeared. We attributed it to Lady Mildew; but we never were certain about it. When read, it was consigned to the four winds, being torn to a thousand atoms, and thrown out of the viranda. Its contents were as follows.

“Lady ——.

“The honor of your house is lost. You have allowed your son to marry a woman of low birth and lost

lost character, and of a foreign religion. You will lose your most respectable acquaintances and best friends. I shall cease to visit you. Remember the deeds of your ancestors in supporting the House of Hanover, and blush.—

Yours,

AN ORANGEMAN."

"P.S. Your daughter is no better than she should be: to whom do you intend to marry her?"

Vastly laconic, and vastly impertinent, said both of us; but we resolved, on never letting the contents be communicated to my brother, and thus the writer lost half of his or her ends. I now come to the event, which procrastinated my intended marriage.

A second cousin, whom we had never much countenanced, once courted me. He was poor, and

was

was rejected by my friends. He went, in the civil service, to India; and, having died, he left me thirty thousand pounds, which came very a propos, as our family was, for very many reasons, falling into poverty.

Anonymous letters were flying in all directions; for Fidelio received one about this time, or rather before we inherited this legacy, advising him against taking me; but he would only shew the letter to my mother, on condition that she would not communicate it to me. Its purpose was to alarm Fidelio as to the danger of connecting himself with a proud, and ruined family. Fidelio, after destroying the letter, put an advertisement into the paper, offering a reward to any one who would discover the author of a libel, on a certain noble family, addressed to a person about to form a matrimonial connection, and conveying his sentiments of abhorrence of such conduct,

to

to the base author of it. This was silencing that battery.

The death of our relative, however, rendered it but decent and grateful to go into mourning, and to put off the marriage ceremony for a short time. For my own part, I never expected to be married ; so many unforeseen events, connected with this subject, always intervened.

Just about this period, another piece of good fortune attended our house, until now marked by vicissitudes and misfortunes. The uncle of my sister-in-law, delighted at the alliance which she had formed, and at the retributive amende of my brother, sent over twenty thousand pounds to his niece, with a promise to leave her, at his demise, the residue of his large property.

The

The writer of the anonymous communications, for the hands were all the same, not content to dissuade Fidelio from marrying me, was resolved that I should have no chance of a return of the Duke's affections; and, after blackening me in his eyes, addressed a short billet to my mother, stating that a rumour had gone abroad that I was to receive his Grace's hand; but to beware, how it would mortify my pride if I was, at a future period, to be un*Duchessed!* and that a rumour had gone abroad and had gained considerable belief, touching a strong doubt of his legitimacy, which would immediately come under investigation. The postscript was, beware of the fate of the B—— peerage; a man may marry when it is too late and of no use to his spurious heir. A word to the wise!

As this subject ceased to interest us as deeply

as

as it once did, we were at ease about the matter, and prepared to visit my brother, in the country, for a few days. During our absence, a female conclave of dowager Ladies, of spinster Lady Marys, and of poor, titled cousins, had sat, to take into consideration the propriety of visiting my sister, and it was agreed, nem. dissent. that she was an impostress, a heretic, a vessel of reprobation, this word was put in by a methodist cousin, who was most violent on the subject, and that she could not be visited, nor even spoken to or tolerated, by their circle.

Three days afterwards, however, the news of our legacy and of the lady's uncle's twenty thousand reached their ears. A fresh meeting was called, and their former resolutions were rescinded. But it was too late. Unfaithful to each other, and unconquerably fond of gossip, their secrets evaporated, and they

were

were saved the trouble of cutting us, for their cards of congratulation were all returned, in blank covers, and they were set down on the porter's list, as never to be let in. My mother also not returning a bow from the leader of the party, at the drawing-room, they understood what was meant, and were never more countenanced by *our* friends.

Thus often do the scandal-mongers of society overreach themselves. Habit makes some of them so expert at detraction, that they scarcely know whether they are lauding or condemning, *bien entendue*, that they never do the former, but with the view of still more condemning—thus: “Mr. W. P. is the best of husbands, a perfect good man; how much more base and black in Lady C—, to have thus betrayed and dishonored him;”—“Miss — is a hospitable creature, her parties are delightful; but she seems to be a

little

little too much alive to the merits of a certain foreign and titled adventurer." So it was, at last, with Lady Mildew and her junta; their tongue was no scandal.

CHAPTER XV.

BEFORE I come to the conclusion of my own history, I had promised to give that of the superior of the convent of ——. It was briefly this. Her father, a rich, an ignorant and a biggotted Hidalgo of Spain, had, as is very common, thought fit to think for his daughter; and, in his ambitious views, to dispose of her person and heart to a superannuated grandee of Espagne. The lady's consent, as in a certain case of the Countess of A—— and daughter, appeared to be a secondary consideration. He showed her to the foolish old man, who wanted an heir in order to cut out his nephew; and next, as a mere matter of form, he broke the matter to his daughter Cecilia.

Independently

Independently of her aversion to a decrepid perambulating skeleton, a thing which looked like the unburied corpse of quality, or like a titled spectre, or like Lady W——, to whom a Frenchman would say, in his vein of ridicule, “*mais mon ami, vous avez oublié de vous faire enterrer* ; she had, unfortunately, seen a young officer of the Walloon Guards, who had made an impression on her young mind. Entreaties, persuasions, menaces and ill treatment were all used, in turn, to influence Cecilia ; but all in vain. The old threat, the convent, was next held out.

Don Felix de la Mela was young and handsome, and had a fine figure and a persuasive voice ; he touched his guittar with a masterly hand, danced like a fairy, and had, more than once, poured out the accents of melodious songs, at the dead and dangerous hour of the night, under Cecilia’s balcony. The convent was a sad choice ; but Don Pedro was the devil.

She

She expostulated. 'Twas in vain ; she therefore entered on her noviciate.

Mutual vows had been plighted in presence of the witnessing nightingale ; accents of love had been given to echo and to the moon ; portraits and locks of hair had been exchanged ; and kisses had been wafted from the extremities of the fingers, and had been committed to the circum-ambient air, which each seemed to catch, each seemed to feel, and which Don Felix appeared to devour with rapturous delight ; but nothing further had passed. Not but that the adventurous serenader had formed plans and stratagems the most numerous ; but a mercenary Duenna, in her master's interest, locks, bars, and bolts, prompt action and sudden operation were too much for the Caballero ; and this *Lumbre de sus ajas*, this Estrella, this Alma de su Vida was taken from him, and fast moored in the convent.

The first days of her noviciate were clouded with melancholy. Neither the magnificence of ceremonies, the beauty of holiness, the examples of immaculate purity, the advice, or the caresses of her sisters, had any effect on her. She fain would be devout, but she was distracted ; she affected retirement, but her heart was with Felix in the world.

Despairing of ever gaining her hand, the Caballero volunteered his services on a dangerous station, and found, in the armed robbers of the Buonapartean dynasty, dangerous foes to oppose. The Spanish campaign endeed his career ; and he may fairly be said to have died for love and glory.

His premature fate was made known to Cecilia ; but far from increasing her miseries, it put a period to them. She had, for a time, lived for him alone ; and had she been free, she would have retired from the world,

world, when deprived of him. She now became contented with her situation. At last, she was perfectly wedded to it. Her noviciate over, she took the religious habit. Experienced in disappointment, she could the better reason on the subject with others. A cheerful resignation followed; and, from her rare merit, she ascended to the situation of Superior of the Convent, beloved and honored by every one.

Her example was powerful with the youth who entered this cloistered abode; but she was cautious and considerate in allowing them to pronounce their vow, wise and discriminating in the discipline of her house, indulgent and patient with all around her. To her superior understanding, to her temperate authority and worldly experience, do we owe the liberation of a sister; and from all I can collect, she is a most superior woman indeed.

Her father was justly punished for his tyranny. Afflicted with disease, he dropped without seeing his only child settled in life, and his name given to oblivion; whilst the Grandee Espagne married a woman of intrigue, who dishonored him without bringing him an heir; and finally his nephew, to whom he was so hostile, succeeded to his titles and estates.

Thus are the projects of the ambitious and avaricious brought to nothing. Like the poor child-
ish tribe, these infants of a riper age, blow out the bubble of their imagination. It swells to vast extent; it glitters in the solar ray; it even reflects the richest, the most gilded and varied tints. The ambitious and wealthy fool is now at the meridian of enjoyment. One more effort to extend it—it bursts in air, and covers him with filth, with vapour, and with confusion. Empty projects, vain designs, children's pastimes—no better are the waking dreams of avarice and pride.

I now

I now come to myself, and, although this be but scarcely a half chapter, I must break off and pause for a moment. I must remember certain things and forget others, lest I swell, like the bubble, or the rich man's projects, into a world of nothingness. I am not going to play the heroine, because truth is my guide, because, as a French woman would importantly say, "*La vérité est ma device.*" I must claim an indulgent hearing, and moreover solicit half a chapter to myself, unmixed with extraneous matter, to wind up, if not the last, at least a very important act of my life.

CHAPTER XVI.

ALL impediments being removed, Fidelio claimed his promise. With respect to myself, I felt that he had won my hand, by so many services; by such long tried constancy and worth, that it seemed his, without my giving it. A special licence noosed me in Hymen's snare; but there was nothing run-away, spirited or romantic in our affairs, which I rather should have liked. My mother, my brother, my *new* sister, and Harry Wildish, were all present; and I vow that we appeared a mere family party, before we reached the hymeneal altar.—“Wilt thou take this man for thy wedded husband?” cried the parson. “To be sure I will,” responded poor I, as a mere matter of course. Another trip to the everlasting cottage on the banks of the Thames, concluded the day; and I could not help

help remarking to Fidelio, " that whenever I was in a scrape, this was my retreat."

" Now for my husband's picture. He is a very handsome man, and quite young enough, being scarcely nine and twenty; but so grave, so experienced, and so sentimental withal, that, put him on a wig, and he might pass for a sage, and for an elder."

Nothing can be more dissimilar than we are; yet, I believe, he will make me a very good hnsband; nay, perhaps the blending of characters, may, in time, improve both, as we shall have the gay and grave between us. We differ upon many subjects, but we fall out on none. If he accompany me with his flute, he is sure to find fault with my time, or with my harp not being sufficiently tuned. I have often a mind to be in a passion; but then there are so many apologeti-

cal prefaces to his remarks; they come so qualified, with, "perhaps, my love, I may mistake :" or, " upon my word, my dear, it strikes me :" or, " do not you yourself think ?" that good breeding forbids me resenting what is meant for my good. No fulsomeness of public and demonstrative tenderness, on his part, ever puts me to the blush ; *et je me plaisir à croire* that his affection may last the longer, on that account, by not being worn out and frittered away in salutes before witnesses, overacted tenderness, minutious and troublesome attentions, and by the extravaganza of "My heart's core, my soul, my dearest love—lovey, dovey, or *odious duckey !*"

Time alone can prove whether we are permanently happy or not; but it must be a great consolation to any bride, to know that her husband is too much the man of honor and the gentleman to use her ill; and, as to the article of fidelity, I think that Fi-

delio

delio is too prudent a man to go *much astray*, and I am sure that he is too cunning an one to let me know it. All this appears to me very comfortable, although, at the same time, my high spirit and invincible *legèreté* make me feel as if I had all the cares of the world now come upon me, and as if, in spite of the kindest manners, I had a lord and master set in authority over me. Let not this frighten my female friends, there is some utility in the thought. I seem as if I could feel for the wings of my freedom; but as if my fingers came in contact with my clipped pinions. Then again that *affiche* upon the finger, in sign and token of obedience—that too is an awful badge. Indeed, indeed my fair readers, wedlock is a serious consideration to the female; whilst the male bears no sign or token of his fetters, flutters about as gaily as ever, and some of them, when away from home, quite cease to be the Benedict entirely, or hold their honors as merely nominal and not obligatory.

tory.—Vastly obliging, you'll say, it is; but thus it is, for all that.

Our numerous acquaintances could not refrain from their inveterate and invincible habits, indulging, as usual, in ill natured remarks. “It was *time* that we were married,” said one. “The bridegroom was not over rash in the matter,” cried another. “A brother’s presence and example might have a powerful effect,” observed a third. “Is it a match of necessity, or of inclination?” enquired a fourth. All these good-humoured things were said behind our backs; but the conviction of not meriting them, and self-approving conscience, make them sit very easily upon my mind.

A good mother living with us, the best of brothers and a happy sister living near us, a very small circle of friends, mostly people of science or of

some

some resource in society, an easy fortune and good health, go a great way towards constituting domestic felicity; but as to the extacies of mutual love, the untroubled stream of bliss, which was to bear one with a curl upon its surface, through beds of roses and banks breathing heavenly odours, making life a golden dream and drowning all care in its oblivious fluid,—such pictures are only to be found in the brains of impassioned lovers of sixteen, in the pages of florid novels and romances, in the notions of the tenants of boarding-schools, or in the lines of Lady C—— L——.

To my readers of both sexes, I address this humble but sincere envoi. May they, collectively and individually, see less of the vicissitudes of life than I have done; and, should they enter into the married state, may their prospects of felicity at least equal mine.

Should

Should my kind friends who have borne with my imperfections through the course of these three Volumes, wish to enquire after the *dramatis personæ* of the work, I beg leave, for their satisfaction and information, to state, that Lady Mildew is gone abroad to avoid a prosecution for defamation, after having been a productive client to Mr. Quick the attorney, and to Mr. Polyphrast the counsel; that Lord Odious is confined to his bed, with a variety of complaints, none of which are so insupportable as a guilty conscience; and that my antediluvian friends, the ambassador's daughters, who were brought up in such purity and with so much care, have all turned out ill; two of them have eloped with young subalterns, quartered within ten miles of their house in the country, and whom, of course, papa neither saw nor suspected; whilst the third has run away with her music master, and, I believe, has forgotten to get married at all.

Lady

Lady D'Autrefois and her husband are parted, by mutual consent, the *motive* alledged being the impossibility of agreeing, and each accusing the other of bad temper. Harry Wildish, who swore that he would never marry, has just run away with a mere infant, from a boarding-school, without money or connections; and our Guard-Exquisite appears as happy as laziness and fashion will allow one to be, who cannot take the trouble of doing any thing to excess, and who would sooner preserve an unruffled countenance than go out of his way for any one enjoyment.

I had nearly forgotten the agreeable Clergyman who accompanied us to the play, and who has, for months, been a welcome visitor, and has had his cover at our table. After assuming the character of the friend of the family, he took courage enough to play another part, and, in a morning walk, with my mother,

mother, the intimacy being now such that we treated him as one of the house, he proposed for her hand; her age was no obstacle to him, whilst her dower, which passes for double what it is, was a powerful attraction for the Reverend gentleman. He hinted that the loss of a favorite daughter might render her low spirited, and require the solace of a friend.

I like him prodigiously as an acquaintance; but have no fancy at all to him as a father-in-law, although I am no longer in leading strings, or in a parent's power. No doubt this same parson has a great share of health, of good humour and of complaisance. His memory serves him to profit by what he has read; he makes nice little sermons of about fifteen minutes length; and is altogether a very decent body; but with all this, he is not so irresistible as to induce my dear mother to change her situation, nor is she so foolish, as many dowager ladies,

ladies, whose *lonesomeness* induces them to share a good dower with a ci-devant tutor, a travelling companion, or a poor gentleman.

Physicians and Clergymen, from the easy access they have to families, have fine opportunities of making a proposal altogether suitable to themselves ; but my mother's health and spirits are such, that she means to have no more medicine nor sermons than are absolutely necessary.

Poor Lady Newfangle is also one of the in-shore party of the coast of France, having played quality tricks until she has burned her fingers ; yet the very migration delights her. “ We quality exiles, we victims of bon ton,” are continually on her lips ; her ruined husband now looks back to old times with regret, and would fain be free and out of debt.

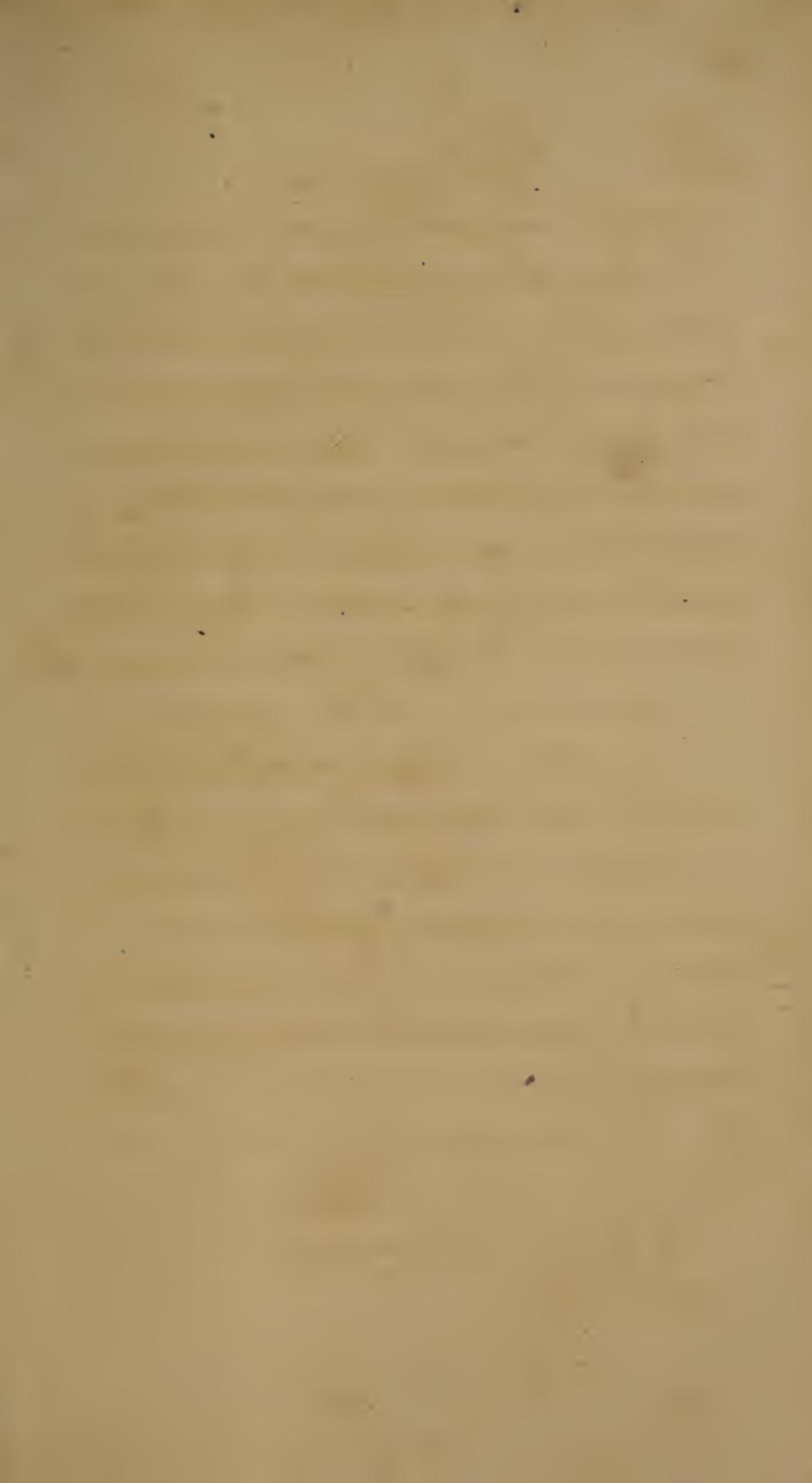
These

These English emigrés are little aware how craftily and with how much ridicule our next door neighbours, the French, view them; much less do they know that their foibles and transactions travel by post, to the corner of Conduit Street, to Stockdale's, to Sams's, and to Hookham's libraries, to the late Dyde and Scribe's in Pall Mall, and are read in a box at the Opera, or in an open carriage driving to the Park.

My brother is likely to have an heir, and I am likely to be seen about town, and to write another life, memoir, satire, or whatever you please to call it, before my gentle reader is aware of it. Adieu, dear friend, for whom and to whom these sheets are addressed. Health and felicity to you, and to all my readers.

THE END.

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